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CHRISTMAS:

ITS CUSTOMS AND CAROLS.

WITH COMPRESSED VOCAL SCORE

OF

SELECT CHORAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY

WILLIAM WALLACE FYFE.

AUTHOR OF "SUMMER LIFE ON LAND AND WATER."

"With Holly and Ivy
So green and so gay,
We deck up our houses
As fresh as the day;
With Bays, and Rosemary,
And Laurel complete,
And everyone now
Is a King in conceit."
Poor Robin's Almanac, 1635.

LONDON:
JAMES BLACKWOOD, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS AND CAROLS.

Part First.

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS.

Introduction—Christmas and its Customs—Christmas Cheer—Spices and Dainties — Christmas Pie — A Northumbrian Recipe — Christmas Decorations — Garlands — Glastonbury Thorn—Mistletoe—Druidical Ceremonies—Kissing — Yule Log—Christmas Candles—German Christmas Tree—Similarity of Pagan Customs—The Grotesque Element—The Supernatural — Games — Ancient Plays, Mysteries, and Moralities—Mumming.

> "A well-beloved servant: he could sing
> Carols for Shrove-tide, or for Candlemas;
> Songs for the wassail, and when the boar's head,
> Crowned with gay garlands, and with rosemary,
> Smoked on the Christmas board."
>
> Southey.—*Joan of Arc*, x., 25.

Hark! on the crisp air, and in the glittering starlight of the Christmas morn, the joyous strains of some fine old melody break strangely on the ear of night.

It is a song intended to mingle joy with wonder. More than eighteen hundred years ago, as we all are taught, it first broke through the solemn stillness of the night; and, after eighteen centuries and a half of time, is still maintained amongst the cherished traditions of men. A striking proof of this fact is found in the circumstance of the words of that sublime and beautiful song, "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men," having been selected as most appropriate for transmission by the first, and hitherto almost only articulate pulsations of the electric cable from the old world to the new. So hoar an antiquity, enhanced, as it is, by traditionary estimation, it were not easy link for link to retrace; but fortunately, the first or main facts of the story are indelibly recorded by the pen of inspiration. Its subsequent Christian progress, and what some might term, its curious social perversions, constitute subjects of somewhat peculiar research. Believing that a popular inquiry into the origin, character, and varieties of Christmas Carols would, therefore, form an acceptable offering for the season, the present endeavour is made to collect into a focus a sufficiency of information and of illustration, to set up a sort of magic

lantern, in the shape of a volume, shadowing forth the succession of Christian phantasmagoria through its slides.

Christmas! Is it needful to pronounce an apostrophe on that which is recognized as peculiarly the home and household festival of England,—longed for as the season when our shining hearths, our seacoal fires, our domestic comforts and social felicity, become the brightest underneath the Christian sun! Commixture of Faith, Hope, and Charity with sport, mirth, and jollity! Christmas is our chosen season of peace and goodwill, of family reunions, of friendly greetings, of happy visits, interchange of gifts, kindness to the poor, mutual esteem, and universal joy. The antiquity and perpetuity of Christmas are understood at once from its quaint and curious customs and observances, blended with the outburst of feelings fresh from the heart. Reserving for separate remark such points as bear peculiarly on the Carols, we must first glance briefly at Christmas in its most ordinary acceptation as a time of revelry. Spiced tankards* and roasted apples before

* *Spiced Tankards.*—If not here used exclusively "for the stomach's sake," the meaning of spices being so much employed at Christmas may

breakfast,* are, it is true, long out of fashion; but turkey, geese, and brawn† the sovereign boar's head,

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be gathered from the history of "The Golden Legend of the Three Kings of Cologne," the wise men, or the magi of the East, noticed in a subsequent page. They bore amongst their gifts gold, frankincense, myrrh, and spices—or, at all events, such spices as the occasion could command might be vicariously substituted for the myrrh.

* *Roasted Apples.*—Ceremonies connected with apples and the apple-tree would rather seem to appertain to Twelfth Night, or the Epiphany; a festival, however, in which also the "Three Kings" are implicated. But it appears that it was vulgarly in the superstitious idea of being able to propitiate the future excellence of the apple crop that later apple-tree invocations were undertaken; for on the eve of Epiphany or Twelfth Night in some parts of Devonshire the farmer and his workmen, with a large pitcher of cider, go to the orchard, and encircling one of the best bearing trees, drink this toast three times:—

"Here's to thee,
Old apple tree—
Hence thou may'st bud,
And whence thou may'st blow,
And whence thou may'st bear
Apples enow."

This practice is commended by Old Herrick, who sings:—

"Wassaille the trees, that they may beare
You many a plum and many a peare;
For more or less fruiting they will bring,
As you do give them wassailling."

† *Turkey, Geese, and Brawn.—Why* these descriptions of dishes, unless that they were conveniently in season (like the evergreens about

and, above all things, mince-pie, believed to combine or imitate the manifold essences or dainties of which the Wise Men of the East were *dona ferentes*, or Gift-bearers, genuine mince-pies of old being actually fashioned into the form of a manger, and for that matter the crossed bands at the top being still traditionally considered to resemble the manner in which a child is secured in its crib. All these last items are still in use, as they have been from time immemorial. Now the symbolism of mince-pie, and the reason for eating it only at Christmas tide being thus suggested, we are able to account for the superstition, that every additional mince-pie then and there consumed is to be imputed as protracting for another day the happiness of the eater's existence. However doubtful that may

---

to be noticed), no one has cared, so far as we are aware, to note. But turkeys, like silks, doubtless came in with the Crusades (although we think that the American sort now chiefly supplies the common breed, much less handsome than the Oriental); and being a kind of conquest from the Paynim, might thus be introduced to glorify a feast peculiarly and symbolically Christian. And Brawn, afterwards discussed under the subject of the "Boar's Head," may in like manner be regarded as having become Christmas fare, out of contempt for the Jews, by whom it was abhorred—even as they were abhorred in turn as betrayers of our Lord.

be upon the ordinary rules of digestion, it is clear that the juveniles have contrived to turn the notion to present account by the extension of this branch of gastronomy. Then comes the Christmas pie, *par excellence*,* for which we present the *recepè* of that dispatched from Howick Hall, for Sir Henry Grey, at Christmas 1769, viz. :—

2 Bushels of flour
20lbs. of Butter
4 Geese
2 Turkeys
2 Rabbits
4 Wild Ducks
2 Woodcocks
6 Snipes
4 Partridges
2 Neat's Tongues
2 Curlews
7 Blackbirds
6 Pigeons.

Almost a century though it be, since this most

* Possibly the detail of such a *pie* may explain the etymology of the word, from *pie* (foot), if all the various feet of the bipeds included in it were, as the custom was, protruded through the crust, as still observed in the construction of pigeon-pie. How much more desirable in an ornithological Noah's ark of the above description may easily be surmised, since the aphorism *Ex pede Herculem* could be so practically illustrated.

admirable *piece de resistance* left Howick Hall, we have excellent reasons for knowing that Northumberland still imitates the example; and that from Newcastle-upon-Tyne the game pies of Northumberland still find their way at Christmas into all parts of the kingdom. In the 26th of Henry III., the sheriff of Gloucester was ordered by that monarch to procure twenty salmon, to be put into pies at Christmas, and the sheriff of Sussex ten brawns, ten peacocks, and other items, for the same purpose.

Nor must we omit the externals that render Christmas so refreshing and gay; the garlands and the dance,* "the music, the rose odours, and the

* *Dancing* is an old established form of Christmas revelry. Most readers of Christmas lore are acquainted with the story of Robert the Priest, who, in the year of our Lord 1012, being disturbed at midnight mass by a band of young men and maidens singing and dancing in the church-yard, since they refused to desist for his entreaties, prayed rather spitefully that they might dance there for ever without the power of ceasing. The spell continued at work for an entire year. The untired dancers continued throughout all that time to dance like mad, sensible of neither heat nor cold, thirst nor hunger; and what appears as remarkable, liable to no tear and wear, or visible decay of their apparel, until Herbert the bishop appeared upon the scene, and disenchanted the revellers *secundum artem*, although at the expense of the lives of some, who died upon the spot. The majority, however,

flowers." The bay, the laurel, the holly, the ivy, the mistletoe, the fir, the box, the rosemary and cypress, with all other evergreens, are consecrated to Christmas, and decorate alike the altar and the hearth, the church, and the hall. For the general use of these plants may be assigned the simple reason of their being almost exclusively available for the occasion; but for their special adoption, symbolical meanings may undoubtedly be found, the most obvious being where the season of fruition corresponds with the season of the birth of Christ, although at variance with the common order of nature. An ingenious writer has for example said: "The laurel speaks of victory; the holly of vigour, and its glowing berries at once of affection and good works; the ivy which clings with such tenacity to that which affords it support, would suggest to us a close adherence to our Christian duties; the mistletoe having medicinal virtues would remind us of Him whose birth we so joyfully cele-

only fell into a profound sleep of three days' duration, and when they awoke, went about spreading the account of the occurrence far and near. The ground of the church-yard in which this dancing extraordinary occurred sunk down under the feet of the dancers until they footed it in a hole, in which they were waist deep.

brate, and its white berries—gems in the crowns of poets—remind us that our thoughts should not be of earth." And we maintain this signification, although by the Germans and others by whom such symbolisms are carried perhaps to excess, particularly in emblematic art, we are accused of being an unideal people. What, for example, is the popular superstition attached to the famous Glastonbury Thorn?* A firm belief in its blossoming—a poetical faith in its throwing out one slight solitary bud of pale and delicate pink inflorescence—at midnight, upon Christmas Eve. Why are our London and country markets upon Christmas Eve heaped with branches of the mistletoe, with its pure, white, and nearly transparent berries, its total production, a miraculous growth? Growing alone amid the death of nature, the blush red fruit of the holly could scarcely fail to excite a

* *Glastonbury Thorn.*—The thorn, as connected with Christ's passion, rather than in any way emblematic of his birth, is not amongst the Christmas plants usually enumerated; but the Glastonbury Thorn holds a conspicuous place in the miracle creed of England, and was once assiduously visited and watched by crowds at the appointed moment, confidently anticipating that they would behold it blossoming. It should be remembered that Glastonbury is certainly the oldest site of English Christianity. Is there not poetry, at all events, in the notion of the thorn of the nativity blossoming on such a spot?

similar share of credulity; and the great profusion of the plant consequently renders it the leading *materiel* for Christmas decoration. Of the mistletoe, however, we must treat more particularly. It is called *mistletan* in the Saxon, being derived from the Danish *mistel*, "bird-lime," and "tan" a twig; for we know very well that its bark being macerated, is, like that of the other decorative tree of Christmas, the holly, productive of bird-lime. The old herbalist, Miller, after an endeavour to account fairly for the propagation of this plant, which most people are aware grows parasitically upon trees (namely by ascribing the transposition of its seeds from tree to tree to the mistle-thrush, and their subsequent adhesion and growth to their being coated with a viscous substance) observes, "the trees which this plant does most readily take upon are the ash, and some other smooth-rind trees;" adding that "whenever a branch of an oak hath any of these plants growing upon it, it is cut off and preserved by the curious in their collections of natural curiosities." This is worthy of notice, as showing that instead of the rule it is the exception, for the mistletoe is to be found growing parasitically upon the oak. Bacon asserts that it grows chiefly upon crab-

apple trees, sometimes upon hazels, rarely upon oaks; but states that the mistletoe of the oak is accounted very medicinal. This part of the faith of our great reformer of philosophy, is yet prevalent. Not long since we overheard a lady in a great market-place, cheapening what the gardener termed "a kissing bush" (*what* will not ladies attempt to cheapen!) On advancing the buyer's argument that the article was literally worthless, great was the derision she encountered from the vendor. Despite the enormous quantity on sale, he protested that ere the close of the market a scramble would ensue for the very scraps and chips; as the poor, who are charged high prices for inferior pieces, believe it to be a sovereign remedy for "all the ills that flesh is heir to." This opinion is as old as the Saxons, in whose language the mistletoe was termed "all-heal." Tusser remarks of it as almost the only green thing flourishing in the open air of our winter:—

"If snow do continue, sheep hardly that fare
Crave mistle and ivy for them for to spare."*

* "This saves many animals from want and death in autumn and spring. In October it blooms in profusion, and its flowers become a

This association is curious, as combining those objects in natural instead of mystical relationship. In reality, "the ivy green," is a churchyard plant, exactly as Charles Dickens has sung, "creeping o'er ruins old," and Shakespeare who has dealt but little in Christmas matters, seems to entertain an equally poor opinion of the mistletoe, saying:—

> "A barren and detested vale you see it is—
> The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,
> O'ercome with moss and baleful mistletoe"

—a natural result of being infested with parasites, which suck up the vigour of the parent tree. Under all these circumstances, the mistletoe appears of rather questionable authority as a Christmas tree. Mr. Brand was informed once by an old sexton at Teddington, that some mistletoe put up in a church at

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universal banquet to the insect race. The great black fly, *musca grossa*, and its numerous tribe, with multitudes of small winged creatures, resort to them; also those beautiful animals, the latest birth of the year, the Admiral and Peacock butterflies. In its honey, it yields a constant supply of food till the end of November. In spring, in the bitter months of March and April, when the wild products of the field are nearly consumed, ivy ripens its berries, and almost entirely constitutes the food of the missel-thrush, the wood pigeon, and other birds."—*Knapp's Journal of a Naturalist*, pp. 66-86.

that place, had been immediately ordered to be taken down by the clergyman. The fact is, that of all our Christmas customs, those connected with the mistletoe are undoubtedly Druidical in their origin. It is not easy to conceive, however, what Dr. Stukeley means by stating, in his rather preposterous work, "The Medallic History of Caurasius," that the mistletoe called "all-heal" was, at the Druid festival of yule-tide laid on their altars "as an emblem of the salutiferous advent of the Messiah." We know that enthusiasts in præ-historic lore pretend to something like an ancient British Church, half Druidical, half believing in Christianity; but we fear that it was not to "the Messiah," that the blood-stained altar of the Druid was reared. The mistletoe taken by the grove-worshippers for a miraculous birth of nature was *itself* doubtless an object of superstitious veneration, if not of worship, alike amongst Celts and Goths. It is a relic of this superstition, and nothing else, that we retain in the form of folk-lore, as regards the mistletoe. The ceremony of cutting down the mistletoe, at all events, appears to have been one of great solemnity. First advanced the bards singing in procession. Next

came a herald, preceding three Druids, bearing golden sickles. Arrived at the spot, the Druid prince, who was likewise chief priest, mounted the oak, and cutting off the mistletoe with a golden sickle, presented it to the others, exclaiming, "The Mistletoe for the New Year!"

This being, like the yule-log, a heathen custom, we have perpetuated the rites of the mistletoe, not in our churches but in our kitchens, just as mock litanies from the Romish ritual became the common staple of children's plays after the Reformation. In the kitchen, then, hangs the mistletoe in great state during "the twelve days of Christmas," its pure white berries glistening in the warm and cheerful light, and whatever female may chance to stand near, and more especially underneath it, be she gentle or simple, the rule is that the young man who happens to be nighest may claim the right of saluting her as often as he can—plucking off a berry at every kiss. It is thus that no less an authority than the venerable Archdeacon Nares remarks:—"The custom longest preserved was the hanging up of a bush of mistletoe in the kitchen, or servants' hall, with the charm attached to it—that the maid who was not

kissed under it at Christmas would not be married that year." Were it our part to offer a word of counsel to the ladies, we should still very much incline to bid them remind the beaux of the necessity of cutting down the mistletoe only with a golden sickle!*

The following curious song of contention betwixt the two Christmas plants, "holly" and "ivy," appears in MS. 5346 of the Harleian collection:

---

* A modern poet, E. T. Watts, has sung of the mistletoe and its season in the right spirit:—

"Hail, hail, to its leaves of rich green,
With pearls that are fit for a queen,
So pure and so white;
Such emblems of innocent mirth,
We'll value as blessings on earth,
In this season of joy, giving birth
To social delight.

"May we, like the mistletoe, shed
A halo of joy o'er each head,
Wherever we go;
In seasons of mirth may we reign,
All joyous, and never give pain:
Our song shall not then be in vain
To the famed mistletoe."

"A SONG TO THE HOLLY AND IVY.

Chorus.—Nay, ivy, nay, it may not be I wys,
Let holy have the maystry, as the manner ys.

Holy stond in the hall, fayre to behold;
Ivy stond without the dore; she ys full sore a cold.
Nay, ivy, nay, &c.

Holy and hys mery men, they dawnsen and they sing;
Ivy and her maydyns, they weepen and they wring.
Nay, ivy, nay, &c.

Ivy hath a lybe; she laughtit with the cold;
So mot they all have that with ivy hold.
Nay, ivy, nay, &c.

Holy hath berys, as red as any rose;
She foster the hunters—keep hem from the dores.
Nay, ivy, nay, &c.

Ivy hath berys as black as any sloe,
There come the owle and ete them as they gro.
Nay, ivy, nay, &c.

Holy hath burdys, a full fayre flock,
The nyghtyngale, the poppyngay, the daynty lavyrock.
Nay, ivy, nay, &c.

Gode ivy what burdys hast thou?
None but the howlets that cry "How, how."
Nay, ivy, nay, &c.

To this piece of emulation betwixt the holly and ivy may not inappropriately be annexed Withers' well-known

CHRISTMAS SONG.

(From Poor Robin's Almanac for 1695.*)*

Now thrice welcome Christmas!
Which brings us good cheer,
Minced pies and plum porridge,
Good ale, and strong beer;
With pig, goose, and capon,
The best that can be,
So well doth the weather
With our stomachs agree.

Observe how the chimneys
Do smoke all about;
The cooks are providing
For dinner, no doubt;
But those on whose tables
No victuals appear,
O, may they keep lent
All the rest of the year.

With holly and ivy,
So green and so gay,
We deck up our houses
As fresh as the day;
With bays and rosemary,
And laurel compleat,
And every one now
Is a king in conceit.

The occurrence of the ivy amidst the Christmas decorations would seem almost more than any of the others to support the allegation of their Pagan origin. The incongruity has not escaped the lash of Rabelais. In Pantagruel (v. xl.) he ridicules "Good man Bacchus in his chariot, riding to and fro fearless of danger, making much of his dear carcase, and cheerfully to sing to all his merry friends. Finally," says he, "we saw the representation of his triumph, which was thus: First, his chariot was wholly covered with ivy, gathered on the mountain Meros; this, for its scarcity, which you know raises the price of everything, and principally of those leaves, in India." Sir Thomas Urquhart explains:—"It is Theophrastus' opinion (in Lib. xvi. cap. 34 of Pliny) that throughout India there grows no ivy." How beautifully has Mrs. Hemans rebuked the ancient superstition!

IVY.

Oh, how could fancy crown with thee,
In ancient days, the God of Wine,
And bid thee at the banquet be
Companion of the vine?

Thy home, wild plant, is where each sound
Of revelry has long been o'er—
Where song's full notes once pealed around,
But now are heard no more.

The Roman, on his battle plains,
Where kings before his eagles bent,
Entwined thee, with exulting strains,
Around the victor's tent!
Yet there, though fresh in glossy green,
Triumphantly thy boughs might wave;
Better thou lov'st the silent scene
Around the victor's grave.

Where sleep the sons of ages flown,
The bards and heroes of the past;
Where, through the halls of glory gone,
Murmurs the wintry blast.
Where years are hastening to efface
Each record of the grand and fair,
Thou, in thy solitary grace,
Wreath of the tomb, art there!

The breathing forms of Parian stone
That rise round grandeur's marble halls,
The vivid hues by painting thrown
Rich o'er the glowing walls;
Th' Acanthus of Corinthian fanes,
In sculptured beauty waving fair—
These perish all, and what remains?
Thou, thou alone, art there.

But what a plea for the ivy at Christmas there is in

these fancies! Christmas is the peculiar season of past memories—a green spot amidst the death of nature—a renewing of time—a hope of eternity—and the poetess seems to pronounce the ivy emblematic of them all!

Nor has the holly been less the object of celebration amongst the poets: as prettily as any, an anonymous songster has hymned

THE HOLLY-TREE BOUGH.

I love this glad season, as yearly it comes,
With its cold to our meadows and mirth to our homes:
I love in the landscape, when whitened with snow,
To mark the bright leaves of the green holly bough.

I love, in the merry fresh days of the spring,
To mark the trees budding, and hear the birds sing;
And now, while our holiday feelings o'erflow,
How cheerfully bright is the green holly bough.

I love, in the warmth of the summer-sunn'd hours,
To wander alone in the sweet leafy bowers;
But I love, in this season, to mingle the glow
Of social delight 'neath the green holly bough.

Then gather it quickly, the berries and spray,
And hang it up high on this festival day;
Let wine, mirth, and music unitedly flow,
All soberly under the green holly bough.

But Southey, in one of his fine imaginative poems, has addressed almost an invocation to

THE HOLLY TREE.

O, reader, hast thou ever stood to see
The holly tree?
The eye that contemplates it well perceives
Its glassy leaves.
Ordered by an Intelligence so wise
As might confound an Atheist's sophistries.

Below, a circling fence its leaves are seen,
Wrinkled and keen;
No grazing cattle, through their prickly round,
Can reach the wound;
But as they grow where nothing is to fear,
Smooth and unarmed the pointless leaves appear.

Amid such fertile associations as the meshes of the poet's web weaves round these objects, endless reasons might, indeed, be found for the emblematic uses to which, at Christmas, we apply them. And quoting from Southey, we are reminded of the verses of a fine old poet, whom he did much to restore to fashion. But old George Withers (1588-1667), in his merry poem of "Christmas," commemorates not only its holly and ivy decorations, but conjures up a vivid picture of a Herefordshire

CHRISTMAS IN THE OLDEN TIME.

So now is come our joyful'st feast,
Let ev'ry man be jolly;
Each room with ivy leaves is drest,
And ev'ry post with holly.
Though some churls at our mirth repine,
Round your foreheads garlands twine,
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,
And let us all be merry.

Now all our neighbours' chimneys smoke,
And Christmas blocks are burning;
Their ovens they with baked meat choke,
And all their spits are turning.
Without the door let sorrow lie,
And if for cold it haps to die,
We'll bury 't in a Christmas pie,
And ever more be merry.

And ev'ry lad is wondrous trim,
And no man minds his labour;
Our lasses have provided them
A bagpipe and a tabor;
Young men and maids, and girls and boys,
Give life to one another's joys;
And you anon shall, by their noise,
Perceive that they are merry.

Rank misers now do sparing shun,
Their hall of music soundeth;
And dogs thence with whole shoulders run,
So all things there aboundeth.

The country folks themselves advance
With crowdy-muttons out of France;
And Jack shall pipe, and Gill shall dance,
And all the town be merry.

Ned Squash hath fetcht his bands from pawn,
And all his best apparel;
Brisk Nell hath bought a ruff of lawn,
With dropping of the barrel;
And those that hardly all the year
Had bread to eat or rags to wear,
Will have both clothes and dainty fare,
And all the day be merry.

Now poor men to the Justices
With capons make their errants,
And if they hap to fail of these,
They plague them with their warrants.
And now they feed them with good cheer,
And what they want they take in beer—
For Christmas comes but once a year,
And then they shall be merry.

Good farmers in the country nurse
The poor, that else were undone;
Some landlords spend their money worse—
In lust and pride in London:
There the roystrers they do play,
Drab and dice their lands away—
Which may be ours another day,
And therefore let's be merry.

The client now his suit forbears,
The prisoner's heart is eased,
The debtor drinks away his cares,
And for the time is pleased.
Though others' purses be more fat,
Why should we pine or grieve at that?
Hang sorrow! Care will kill a cat—
And therefore let's be merry.

Hark! how the wags abroad do call
Each other forth to rambling;
Anon, you'll see them in the hall
For nuts and apples scrambling.
Hark, how the roofs with laughter sound;
Anon they'll think the house goes round,
For they the cellar's depth have found,
And there they will be merry.

The wenches with their wassail bowls,
About the streets are singing;
The boys are come to catch the owls,
The wild mare in is bringing;
Our kitchen-boy hath broke his box,*
And to the dealing of the ox
Our honest neighbours come by flocks,
And here they will be merry.

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* *Christmas Box.*—Every one is familiar with this popular "institution." Compare the lines in Gay's "Trivia."—

"When time comes round a Christmas box they bear,
And one day makes them rich for all the year."

Now kings and queens poor sheepcotes have,
And mate with ev'ry body;
The honest now may play the knave,
And wise men play the noddy.
Some youths will now a mumming go,
Some others play at Rowland-bo,
And twenty other games boys mo,
Because they will be merry.

Then wherefore in these merry days
Should we, I pray, be duller?
No, let us sing some roundelays,
To make our mirth the fuller;
And while we thus inspirèd sing,
Let all the streets with echoes ring—
Woods, and hills, and everything
Bear witness we are merry.

We are well persuaded that for the most part these allusions of the jovial singer will not be found obscure; and several of them we shall presently touch upon. We have just discussed the festive decorations. The feasting had previously been disposed of. The dancing, too, has been adverted to as a seasonable recreation. The intermixture of all ranks, classes, and relations of life may be deduced as a consequence from the lesson implanted by Christ's humbling himself to descend for

a season amongst men. The minor details are equally intelligible—the rude mirth and diversion created by the scramble for nuts and apples. The "Wassail bowls" of the "wenches" in the streets, are said to proceed from the legendary scene betwixt Rowena and Vortigern. Our Saxon ancestors being addicted to the barbarous practice of quaffing their ale and mead on festive occasions out of the skulls of their enemies, Rowena, the fair daughter of Hengist, obtains the credit of having converted the Prince Vortigern from the custom in question, by presenting to him a wine-bowl, with the salutation, "Wass-heil;" to which the Prince not only responded with the countersign of "Drinc-heil," but, smitten with the lovely maiden's charms, married her into the bargain. And hence the adoption of the Wassail-bowl. Now, the Saxon term for Christmas (*yule*) is altogether either derived from ale, or ale from it; *ywyl* in Welsh, and *yeol* in Saxon, equally means a "holiday," and that the holiday which the northern nations were accustomed to observe on the 25th of December, in honour of the god Thor, or in celebration of the returning power of

the sun at the winter solstice; but *yule* also signifies *ale*, which being the great Saxon beverage, doubtless became a term both for the season and its enjoyments. We must recur to the Pagan term, because the yule-log manifestly belongs to that period, though now regarded as a Christian symbol, being brought in with processional singing upon Christmas eve:—

"Come bring with a noise,
My merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing;
While my good dame she
Bids you all be free,
And drink to your heart's desiring."

The log being thus dragged in, was lighted with a brand saved from the previous year's burning: and Christmas candles are still lighted up, in evident allusion to that "light to lighten the Gentiles," which shone upon the plains of Bethlehem.

Combining the two peculiarities of light and life, the Germans, in the fanciful bent of their genius, have introduced the pretty device of the Christmas tree, with its branches yet green and growing, its boughs all studded with wax lights, all pendant with gifts. The

adoption amongst ourselves of so graceful and engaging a custom of the German fatherland has added a new and interesting, as well as elegant feature, to our Christmas juvenile parties, and opened a new source of pleasurable surprises for the exhibition of the family affections. The tree prepared in secrecy by the good *genii* of the family is suddenly revealed, with all its glorious gifts and radiant splendours, an object of joyful amazement. The custom truly seems in strict harmony with that ancient name for Christmas —"The Feast of Lights."

Certain writers have sought to derive the decorations and usages of Christmas (particularly the decorations), from the Pagans, as if it made a point against the Christian religion, that popular, and, in that case, probably inveterate customs, should be perpetuated in a new spirit! But even if so (which may be doubted), would not this merely manifest a beautiful and accommodating disposition on the part of the early professors of Christianity, austere, as they are reputed, towards lay customs and manners? It may be doubted, because the advent of true Christianity everywhere has invariably taken the form and character of a Reforma-

tion. This was no less the case at its first establishment under imperial authority, than at the period of its purgation from the errors and abuses of the middle ages. Thevery term "Pagans," applied to its opponents, supplies proof of the fact now stated. "And because," says Dr. Adam, "upon the public establishment of Christianity in the Empire, when, by the decrees of Constantine and his sons, the profane worship of the gods was prohibited in cities, and the temples shut; those who were attached to the old superstition fled to the country, and secretly performed their former sacred rites in the villages, hence 'Pagans' came to be used for 'Heathens!'" Indeed, the early councils of the Church, forbade Christians to deck their houses with bay leaves and green boughs at the same time with the Pagans. Nevertheless, Polydore Virgil (1488-1550) tells us that "trymmynge of ye temples with hangynges, floures, boughes, and garlandes, was taken of ye heathen people, which decked their idols and houses with such arraye." And certainly the old Church calendars are marked at Christmas Eve, "*Templa exornantur*"—churches are decked. But, then, "In sacrifices," says an authority just above

cited, "it was requisite that those who offered them should bathe themselves, be dressed in white robes, and crowned with the leaves of that tree which was thought most acceptable to the god whom they worshipped. As we have seen, however, almost all evergreens, and especially those in fruition at the Christmas season, were adopted as emblems of the new-born life, without distinction—whereas Pagan superstition would have regarded with horror the employment of any other than the votive foliage.

As a season of festive joy and gladness, Christmas must be the happiest in the year, guarded as it is by the higher religious feelings and finer social emotions from rioting and excess. Yet in all our Christmas associations, there mingles one broad element, the grotesque, which it is not easy to explain. In the case of Christmas Carols, for instance, their successive eras—whether the purely ecclesiastical, the secular or the festive—a resemblance has been traced to the distinctive periods of Gothic architecture, ascending from the quaint simplicity of the early models, to the contorted exaggerations of form, the grinning visages, and ludicrous corbels that stud the mediæval structures,

beautiful in their elaboration or majestic in their solemn and stupendous grandeur. All this is human; and man the only laughing animal—since the so-called laugh of the hyæna, is no laugh at all, but a counterfeit scream of rage. Tradition proves that men throughout all the Christian era, have ever let loose their mirth and drollery at Christmas tide. And so amidst the gorgeous tracery of the sculptured fanes of the 11th and 12th centuries, the Church architects did not hesitate to perpetuate their jibes in stone, although asceticism may ascribe this to a different purpose, viz., in order to enhance the seriousness of devotion, by putting the risible faculties to the severest test Was there in either case, then, irreverence? We are no theologians; yet this perplexing circumstance would simply appear to say that heaven descends on earth—repressing not the natural mirth of man. By secular reasoners it will doubtless be argued that the religious incompatibility here alluded to, may be accounted for by referring the origin of Christmas festivities to the Saturnalia of December* in the

* *Saturnalia.*—"The origin of the Saturnalia, as to the time, is

ancient world—the feasts of Saturn—the most celebrated of the whole year — when all orders were devoted to mirth and feasting, friends sent presents to one another, and masters treated their slaves upon a footing of equality; at first for one day, afterwards for three, and by the order of Caligula and Claudius for five, to which another two days called *Sigillani* were added, during which small images were sent by parents as presents to their children. All this proves only that society having once indulged in such seasonable gladness, would naturally be loth to relinquish it; and surely there was nothing in the message

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unknown, Macrobius assuring us that it was celebrated in Italy long before the building of Rome (*Macrob. Saturn.*, I., 7). The story of Saturn, in whose honour it was kept, everybody is acquainted with. As to the manner of the solemnity, besides the sacrifices and other feasts of public worship, there were several lesser observations (observances) worth our notice, as the liberty now (then) allowed to servants to be free and merry with their masters, so often alluded to in authors. 'Tis probable this was done in memory of the liberty enjoyed in the Golden Age under Saturn, before the names of master or servant were known to the world. Besides this, they sent presents to one another amongst friends; no war was to be proclaimed, and no offender executed. The schools kept a vacation, and nothing but mirth and freedom was to be met with in the city."—Kennett's *Romæ Antiquæ Notitia.*

of peace on earth, goodwill towards men, to occasion any alteration in this respect?

The festive character of Christmas being undeniable, an inevitable result of its indulgence would seem to be the introduction of games and tales to beguile the time. Hence the innumerable games of chance, in-door sports and pastimes of the season, with all the gay and sparkling tribe of Christmas crackers, riddles, puzzles, plays, charades, conundrums, to which we may probably allude more amply in the sequel. But here we are met by another incongruity. Whence the tales of "goblin, ghost, and fairy," so expressly appropriate to the occasion? Shakespeare seems to offer one solution, speaking of some special exemption the blessed period of Christmas is held to enjoy from the spells of witchcraft, sorcery, and evil:—

> "Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes,
> Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> The bird of dawning singeth all night long,
> And then they say no spirit can walk abroad.
> The nights are wholesome—then no planets strike,
> So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

That is to say, the believers in sprites, ghosts and

fairies, naturally apprehensive of speaking of them too freely at ordinary times, embrace with avidity the opportunity of this Christmas truce. It is in vain that such as Bishop Corbet, in his well-known song,* tells us there are no longer any such things :—

THE FAIRIES' FAREWELL.

Farewell, rewards and fairies,
Good housewives now may say,
For now foul sluts in dairies
Do fare as well as they.
And though they sweep their hearths no less
Than maids were wont to do,
Yet who of late for cleanliness
Finds sixpence in her shoe?

Lament, lament, old abbeys,
The fairies' lost command,
They did but change priests' babies,
But some have changed your land;
And all your children, sprung from hence,
Are now grown puritans,
Who live as changelings ever since
For love of your domains.

* *The Fairies' Farewell.*—"A proper new ballad, entitled, 'The Fairies' Farewell,' to be sung or whistled to the tune of 'The Meadow Brow,' by the learned; by the unlearned to the tune of 'Fortune.' By Dr. Corbet, Bishop of Oxford and Norwich, in the beginning of the seventeenth century."

At morning and at evening both
You merry were, and glad,
So little care of sleep and sloth
Those pretty ladies had.
When Tom came home from labour,
Or Cis to milking rose,
Then merrily, merrily went their tabor,
And merrily went their toes.

Witness those rings and roundelays
Of theirs which yet remain,
Were footed in Queen Mary's days,
On many a grassy plain;
But since of late Elizabeth,
And later James came in,
They never danced on any heath
As when the time hath been.

By which we note the fairies
Were of the old profession,
Their songs were Ave Maries,
Their dances were procession;
But now, alas! they all are dead,
Or gone beyond the seas;
Or farther for religion fled,
Or else they take their ease.

The games indulged in at Christmas parties are quite as much after the antique model as any part of the festivities. It may scarcely be credited that this identity extends even to the fact of the playful forfeits

taking the form of kisses; but still more expressly to the structure of the entertainment. Thus in Bishop Potter's *Archæologia Græca*, we have the following explicit account of the Greek Aunt Sally or Cottabus (omitting learned quotations):—

"The later Greeks, laying aside the violent exercises which were anciently used, diverted themselves with such sports and recreations as required less toil and labour. The several sorts of sports and games that were practised by the Greeks, have been accurately described by the learned Meursius, and from him again by Bulengerus; they are too numerous to be recounted in this place; however, the Cottabus, which was more peculiar to entertainments, and is on that account described by *Pollux*, and takes up several pages in *Athenæus*, must not be omitted. This pastime was first invented in Sicily, whence it was communicated to most other parts of Greece, especially to Athens, where it obtained very great repute. The form was this:— A piece of wood being erected, another was placed upon the top of it, with two dishes hanging down from each extremity, in the manner of scales; beneath each dish was placed a vessel full of water, wherein stood a statue composed, for the most part, of brass. They who played at the Cottabus stood at some distance, holding a cup of water or wine, which they endeavoured to throw into one of the dishes, so that the dishes might by the weight be knocked against the head of the statue under it. The person who threw in such a manner as to spill least of his water, and to knock the dish with greatest force upon the statue was conqueror, and thought to reign in his mistress's affections, which was the thing to be learned by the pastime. They turned round their right hand with a sort of dexterity or art upon which they very much valued themselves. The prizes were sweetmeats, kisses, or what else the company agreed upon, and so

much addicted were they to this pastime that they had not only vessels made for it with the utmost art and care, but round-houses built in such a manner that the Cottabus being placed exactly in the middle, the gamesters might stand at equal distances on all sides. There was another sort of Cottabus, wherein a vessel was placed full of water, with empty vials swimming upon it; into this they projected wine out of cups, and he that had the fortune to drown the greatest number of vessels, obtained the prize. There was also another sort of Cottabus, wherein they projected dice. Lastly, another sort of Cottabus is mentioned, which was a contention who should sit up the longest awake; the prize was commonly a cake made of honey and sesame, or wheat, and these are the most usual forms of this pastime.

"It was also necessary to entertain the guests with suitable discourses, as well as with sports and pastimes. . . . . Nevertheless it was also customary by turns to unbend their minds and divert them from serious affairs, by discourses upon ludicrous arguments. At the Syssitia of the Lacedæmonians, where the most grave and important subjects were treated on, they also used to sport and to jest, though without any of that scurrility and reflection which is apt to give offence. And from the table discourses of Plutarch and others, it appears to have been the ancient custom to contrive their discourses in such a manner as would both entertain and instruct the company; nevertheless in the time of Plutarch they rarely discoursed upon any serious arguments at public entertainments; whence a discourse being begun in Nicostratus's house concerning a subject which was to be discussed in the public assembly at Athens [*i. e.* no politics permitted], some of the company who had never heard of the ancient Greek custom, affirmed that it was in imitation of the Persians [what a satire!] And this question is propounded by the same author [Plutarch to wit] whether it were allowable to discourse philosophy over their cups? Some delighted to tell stories, and to repeat ancient fables on these occasions [all of them Ghost Stories of course]; others

chose to lead some diverting discourse or to hear a poem repeated, which was very common amongst men of letters; but no diversion was more usual, than that of propounding and answering difficult questions."

Could anything be more strictly in keeping with the observances of the present day, distance of time considered! Not only so, but—

"The person who solved the question propounded was honoured with a reward; he who was not so fortunate underwent a certain punishment; the rewards were a garland and the applause of the company, as we learn from the same author; the punishment was to drink, without taking breath, a cup of wine mixed with salt, as *Athenæus* has proved out of the *Ganymedes of Antiphanes;* the reward according to Pollux, was a dish of meat, the penalty a salt cup."

Really, but that our author was a bishop, and could quote the original Greek, with which we studiously refrain from troubling our holiday readers, we should suppose he were hoaxing us with some college reminiscence of the salt and water to be swallowed by freshmen who would not sing.

Assuming that these proofs of the antiquity of Christmas fun and frolic (though applicable to entertainments generally amongst the gay-hearted Greeks in their hours of relaxation), must in all conscience suffice, we turn at once to the modern transmutation

which amusements of this nature have undergone. Nor do we know that a better illustration could be afforded of the actually existing state of Christmas Games, than in the following given in last season's *Illustrated London News*:—

THE CHRISTMAS GAME OF PLUM PUDDING.

"The table cleared, a small round plate (a round piece of wood is better) is provided, and ranging themselves round the table, the company proceed to choose partners by fixing upon two Field Marshals, Sir Loin and General Kettle. These officers then commence choosing alternately their soldiers from amongst the company, performing the ceremony of conferring titles as they choose, on the gentlemen with a sharp blow of a walking stick, on the ladies with a kiss, thus:—

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sir Loin.	General Kettle.
General Goose.	General Tongs.
Lieutenant-General Duck.	Lieutenant-General Carver.
Major-General Muffin.	Major-General Fork.
Colonel Crumpet.	Colonel Coffee-pot.
Colonel Carrot.	Colonel Corkscrew.
Major O'Mutton.	Major Cracker.
Private Partridge.	Major Spit.
,, Pine.	Corporal Steel.
,, Potato.	,, Toast-rack.
,, Plum.	Private Plate.
,, Peach.	,, Pail.
,, Pigeon.	,, Pot-lid.
,, Pear.	,, Poker.

And as many more as requisite."

The game begins with General Kettle, who takes the plate (called "the plum-pudding") between his finger and thumb, ready for spinning on the table, and commences his narrative:—

"As I was sitting on the fire this morning, spluttering with rage at having no enemy to boil, who should come along, in his bag and string, but old plum-pudding! The moment he caught sight of me he ran off—I after him. When, turning round a corner, I ran up against Major O'Mutton."

At this word General Kettle spins round the "plum-pudding," which it is Major O'Mutton's duty to keep up, at the same time continuing the story in his assumed character until he has mentioned "plum-pudding," and also introduced in his turn the name of an antagonist from the opposite list, who again is required to continue the game.

The two greatest difficulties consist in keeping up the "pudding," and continuing the story. The first, however, becomes very easy, after a little practice, there being numerous devices to keep it from falling, such as patting it on one side until it recovers the perpendicular, or dexterously giving it a twist with finger and thumb, as it slackens its speed. The second is more difficult, but one safe rule may be given. Never

think you are yourself—always remember you are muffin, partridge, goose, tongs, toast-rack, or whatever other more or less difficult *role* you have to play. Remember, particularly, that forfeits are exigible, first, for letting the "plum-pudding" fall; secondly, for speaking of yourself as a human being; thirdly, for failing to continue the story; fourthly, for omitting to mention "plum-pudding;" and, fifthly, for calling an enemy by a wrong title. One hundred forfeits may form the limit of the game, when the armies are numerous, but less will do when the party is small. The penalties adjudged in Sir Loin's army are these:—*Basted*—You are followed and beaten with handkerchiefs round the room. *Seasoned*—To kiss every lady in the room, in the certainty of having your face slapped in return. *Skewered*—Trussed on two walking sticks, and set in a corner until some lady is kind enough to relieve you with a kiss. *Roasted*—Walk up to every lady in the room, and should she not wish to kiss you, she will catch you by the arms and give you a turn round, nor are you supposed to be "done to a turn" until some lady condescends to impart a chaste salute. In General Kettle's army, the penalties are these:—

Scrubbed—Must ask every lady present to kiss you; any one refusing to scrub your face with a handkerchief, *à la sa façon;* but when kissed your doom is ended. *Scoured*—The same process. *Sharpened*—Two *grindstones* (gentlemen) try their utmost to prevent your catching and kissing the lady of your selection. *Blackleaded*—Must go round asking the company what they think of you, hearing something disparaging from each in reply. *Washed*—Exactly the reverse; all the company overwhelming you with fulsome praises. Slight variations of the above are demanded in the cases of ladies.

Less genteel and fastidious than the *Illustrated News* author, another popular writer gives a graphic version of a similar play, called "The Author, a Tale of Real Life." In this instance, "the Author" comes ready prepared with his story, assigning to each of the company a character in it, or even one of the names of the inanimate objects intended to be alluded to. When, in relating his story, he has occasion therefore to mention any of those names, the recital immediately devolves on the person mentioned, whose endeavour must be either to bring in another of the personages,

or the Author again. Should he hesitate, or fail, he incurs forfeit. But the author enjoys the privilege of being entitled to stop short if he pleases, and of pointing to any one, requiring him to give a word, which, if at variance with the sense of the relation (as it ought to be) the Author is required on his part to dovetail into the recital as if perfectly suitable. This game is sustained until two or three forfeits have been incurred by each, or until the Author, who pays three forfeits for one failure, fails himself. Our facetious friend gives as an example, the story of "Indulgent Parents taking their Offspring to see the Lord Mayor's Show." There are Mr. and Mrs. Toddles, with Bobby, Tommy, Sarah, and Betsy. Then there is the Conductor; and there is the Omnibus; and there is, moreover, Cheapside, with the policeman, the man in armour, the flagbearer, the Lord Mayor, and the pieman, and so forth! Mr. Toddles is made Speaker.

"Now, then, come along, my dears; splendid day, 'pon my word. Now *do* make haste, Mrs. Toddles."

Mrs. Toddles.—"Well, *I'm* sure! how you flurry one! here's my shawl in such a mess, and my bonnet, I do believe the flowers have been all spoiled on purpose by that Betsy!"

Betsy.—"Oh, dear, I never touched it. I saw it under the sofa, and Master Bobby——"

Bobby.—"O then! you story, I didn't; you know, Tommy?"

Tommy,—"O, here's a lark! going to the show; somebody tie my handkerchief, Sarah!"

Sarah.—"You little bother, you; I'll tell your mother."

Mrs Toddles.—"Now, my dear children." (Children being mentioned, all begin to talk at once, and Mrs. Toddles, in despair, calls upon Mr. Toddles.)

Mr. Toddles.—"Now, really, this is too bad; but, there—out with you, and stop the first 'bus."

Omnibus.—"O, my eye! here's a family coming; they'll burst my poor old sides. Of course, they'll say children take no room! I wish the Conductor ——"

Conductor.—"Going down, sir? plenty of room," &c., &c.

And so the game proceeds.

Many other games might be exemplified. In one called "MESSENGERS," professing to arrive from various quarters, they report to the Master of the Revels, from the kitchen, from the drawing-room, from the opera, from the West-end, from the Palace, from St. Giles's,

from the Docks, &c., &c. Each being bound to relate stirring news from the place referred to, and forfeiting, in case of relating whatever was impossible to have happened there, or anything copied from another's account, all as determined on by chosen umpires. Another termed "THE BAR OF JUSTICE," supposes four judges to be chosen, and a like number of accusers to come forward, whilst one person is placed blindfolded on a stool, or chair, in the character of criminal. One of the accusers, formally addressing the judges, imputes generally heavy charges against the accused; stating that he throws himself on their wisdom to clear him! The judges command the accusers to approach and declare the nature of their accusations; two of them accordingly go one after another to one judge, two others to the next, and so on, declaring of what they conceive the prisoner guilty, each judge proclaiming to the blindfolded prisoner what has been thus laid to his charge; and it is then for the latter, on being restored to the use of his eyesight, to declare by whom each particular charge has been laid against him. Failing to name one correctly throughout all the accusations, he must remain at the bar; but upon guessing

aright, the person whom he names is placed at the bar in his stead, and undergoes the ordeal, with the late prisoner for a judge. The last of these criminals must, over and above his forfeits, perform some extraordinary task. "COMPOSITION" is a play in which the presiding personage, starting the subject, demands the composition of "plum-pudding," or any other thing, by asking No. 1 "What's such a pudding made of?" No. 1 answering, "plums," and immediately asking No. 2, "What else?" No. 2 replies, "Flour," asking No. 3, "What else?" No. 3 responds, "Suet," and puts the query to No. 4, and so on. The presiding individual, finding this point exhausted, may, striking with the hammer, then change the current of inquiry thus: "How are these things mixed?" which again goes the round. But should the president change the question whilst any one is able to prove it inexhausted, a forfeit is incurred. "DOUBLE MEANINGS" are played at by one person quitting the room, and the others in his absence agreeing on two words of the same sound but different significations, "key—quay." On re-admission, the inquirer asks the following questions, and receives such as the following replies, in the way

of aiding him to arrive at the word, or words: "How do you like it?" he asks; "Strong," he is told (of the quay). "Bright," he is told (of the key). "What do you do with it?" "Fasten my ships to it," is told of the one; "Make myself all right with it," of the other, "What is it made of?" "Stone"—"iron"—are the contradictory responses; but forfeits are incurred alike by the interrogator and interrogated, whether for bad guesses or for bad answers, as well as for repeating answers previously given. A modification of Blind-man's Buff, considered to be better suited for grown people, is sometimes introduced under the designation of "Shadow Buff." At some distance from a wall against which a light has been placed, a sheet is suspended, so that the shadow of each person passing betwixt the light and the sheet may be projected as the latter. The Shadow Buff, standing without, undertakes to guess who it is. The amusement consists in disguising the figure to the utmost extent, and so as to throw a false shadow, whereby forfeits are incurred by bad guesses, and the detected individual becomes the Shadow Buff. Finally, in "The Knight of the Whistle," a chapter of that order

is formed by twenty or more of "the initiated," sitting in a circle, in which an opening is left. The candidate for initiation is led forth to be blindfolded in another room, whilst every imaginable obstruction is, in his absence, placed in his intended path, ropes, chairs, baskets, stools, and so forth. On being again led in, he is solemnly warned of the dangers that environ the path of knighthood in the pursuit of glory, but earnestly counselled to persevere. Being carefully conducted into the presence of each difficulty in detail, laughter inextinguishable is generally created by his kicking down the barriers in all directions, until, his patience in all probability exhausted, he is next guided within the circle of belted knights, and this time admonished that he has now to undergo the most difficult trial of all—a trial of patience indeed. Whilst his attention is occupied by this ominous address, a whistle is in process of being slyly appended to his coat tail, blown shrilly, and now the blindfolded one is left to discover by whom the whistle is blown, never, of course, suspecting it to be pinned to his own back!

Such are the whimsicalities of Christmas tide;

childish, we may term them; but may not the intention be to restore a little of the innocent gaiety of childhood to "children of a larger growth," in the rude notion of celebrating the nativity of "the child" that then was born? We are fain to imagine, that in the simplicity of human nature there may have been some such notion when first these amusements were adopted.

Of all Christmas practices, that of mumming, however, comes nearest the main feature of these rejoicings which we purpose shortly illustrating in the shape of Carols. To understand the Christmas mummings aright, it is necessary to enter very briefly into some account of the ancient mimes in which they originated, as well as of the ancient mysteries and moralities, degenerating into our court masks of later date, but by many assumed to be the origin of the modern drama, and certainly, so far as musical adaptation was concerned, giving rise to the sacred oratorio, if not also to the profane opera.

It certainly is a remarkable fact, which we learn from Livy—remarkable as connected with the purpose to which the masks and mysteries of the Christian era

were devoted, that dramatic entertainments, or stage plays, were first introduced at Rome, to appease the divine wrath on account of a pestilence, A.D. 391 (Liv. vii. 2), there having previously only been the games of the circus. They were first acted in a shade formed by branches and leaves of trees, hence the accompanying "scenery." These stage plays came first from Etruria; but the Tuscan players did nothing save dance to a flute, without any verse or corresponding action; they did not speak, as their language was unintelligible to a Roman audience. From Horace (Ep. ii. 1, 145) we learn, however, that the Roman youth soon began to imitate them at solemn festivals, particularly at harvest-time, by throwing out raillery at one another, with gestures suited to the sense. This was subsequently improved into the dramatic satires in verse, set to music, repeated with corresponding action, and accompanied with dancing and the flute. From these satires the idea of the first of the regular plays, by which they were superseded, was derived by Lucius Andronicus (A.D. 512), who, being the actor of his own compositions, and frequently *encored* by the audience, usually became so hoarse that he obtained

permission to have a boy at hand to sing to the flute whilst he acted. Hence, even in Shakespeare's time, actors (there were no actresses) never sang, but used to have a person ready to warble for them. Anciently, there appears to have consequently been a song at the end of each act. All this evinces the classicality of the mummers or guisers' plays we are about to notice; for they observe precisely the same forms.

Thespis, after whom actors are still commonly called Thespians, had invented tragedy 356 years before Christ; and in common with the representers of the ancient mysteries, he went about from village to village in Athenæ, exhibiting in a cart, on which a temporary stage was erected, where he played and sung, he and his troop having their faces besmeared with lees of wine. Thespis was the contemporary of Solon, the wise lawgiver of Greece, but it is due to the gravity of Solon, and perhaps equally so to the enterprise of Thespis, as a theatrical manager, to state that Solon, as we learn from Plutarch, was a most determined enemy to his dramatic representations. Between the acts of a tragedy, a number of singers, called the chorus, who appear to have been perma-

nently located on the stage throughout the performance, came forward, and in the person of their Choragus or Coryphæus, who spoke for the rest, took such liberties of speech, that this excessive license was ultimately suppressed by law.

The mimes or pantomimes were representations in dumb show, the invention (in that form) of Augustus, since the preceding *Mimi*, as we have seen, had both spoken and acted. They now expressed everything by their gestures and dancing, without speaking.

Whatever similarities we may trace in these classic instances of dramatic action, there can be no question that the practice of itinerating or going about singing Carols on Christmas Eve, which still obtains extensively in this country, particularly in the Midland Counties and on their Yorkshire border, originated with the ancient religious masks, called "Mysteries and Moralities." Following the account of Sismondi, we find that at a time when the theatre of the ancients had become completely forgotten, the French were the first to dream of submitting to the eyes of assembled spectators, the great events which had accompanied the establishment of the Christian religion, the

mysteries of which it enjoins the belief, or even the particular traits of domestic life, best calculated to raise a laugh amidst serious contemplations. The first who awoke the attention of the people by these compositions, with many characters represented, were the pilgrims returning from the Holy Land, who were thus enabled to bring before the eyes of their compatriots what their own eyes had beheld, and all the world desired to know. It was only then towards the end of the 14th century, that a company of pilgrims, who had solemnised by a brilliant spectacle the nuptials of Charles VI. and of Isabella of Bavaria, established themselves permanently at Paris and undertook to amuse the public by regular representations. They were named "The Brotherhood of the Passion," because the most celebrated of their spectacles represented that mystery. This "Mystery," the most ancient of all our dramatic works, comprehended, not the nativity, but the entire history of our Saviour from his baptism to his death. It was too long for representation in one day, and was consequently continued under representation from day to day, so that the whole "Mystery" was divided into a

certain number of days, of which each composed the work or representation of a day. Thus the name of *journee* (day) in the division of theatrical pieces, which was abandoned in France with the ancient "Mysteries," is still retained in the Spanish l anguage, where they have forgotten its origin! Eighty-seven persons appeared successively in "The Mystery of the Passion." Amongst them were seen the three personages of the Trinity—six angels, one archangel, twelve apostles, six devils, Herod with his whole court, and many personages of the poet's own invention. Daring machinery would appear to have been employed to give to the representation all the pomp which we of the present day reserve for the Opera. Many scenes appear to have been sung. There were at once two choirs, and the mingling of the verses together vindicates an exact acquaintance with the harmony of language. Such, at least, is the verdict of Sismondi, who proceeds to add, what may be very true, that the citation of a few verses would afford no idea of a work so long and varied, that, printed in two columns, in the form of a thick volume in folio, it exceeds in length the entire collection of the

complete works of the whole tragic poets! The example set by the grand "Mystery of the Passion" was speedily followed by a string of poets, of whom the most part remain anonymous. "The Mystery of the Conception," that of "The Nativity," and that of "The Resurrection," are amongst the most ancient. The legends of the saints were each in turn dramatised, and prepared for representation; and the Old Testament passed almost entirely through the theatre!

The "Moralities" arose in this manner. The clerks of La Bazoche had formed at Paris a corporation for the representation of spectacles; but as the "Brotherhood of the Passion" had obtained a patent for the exclusive representation of "Mysteries" in 1402, the others were constrained to invent a novelty in which, under the name of "Moralities," the parables of the Bible, such as that of the Prodigal Son, were made use of. They did not regard themselves as by any means ecclesiastical personages, those clerks of La Bazoche. Thus, whilst the "Brotherhood of the Passion" were restricted to edifying matter, they were enabled to mingle with their "Moralities," farces, the aim of

which was to create laughter. A regular history of literature would necessarily trace from these sources the progress of the respective branches of the legitimate drama. In the crude and popular plays of the people, it is, however, equally obvious that the traditionary origin of Christmas plays—the grotesque representations of Guisards—were derived, and, if you will, corrupted from the same originals. In England, the Coventry Plays and the Moralities of Chester, mark the chief seats of these religious dramas.

An illustration may, probably, stand, as usual, for the best proof of all this; and here is one which bears to be published at "Whitehaven, Cumberland, by T. Wilson, King-street." No date—8 pp. 8vo.:—

ALEXANDER; OR THE KING OF EGYPT.

A MOCK PLAY, AS IT IS ACTED BY THE MUMMERS EVERY CHRISTMAS.

Act I.—Scene 1.

Enter ALEXANDER.

ADEXANDER (*speaks*)—

Silence, brave gentlemen:—If you will give an eye,
Alexander is my name, I'll sing a tragedy.
A ramble here I took, the country for to see,

Three actors I have brought so far from Italy;
The first I do present, he is a noble king,
He's just come from the wars—good tidings he doth bring.
The next that doth come in, he is a doctor good,
Had it not been for him I'd surely lost my blood.
Old Dives is the next, a miser, you may see,
Who, by lending of his gold, is come to poverty.
So, gentlemen, you see our actors will go round;
Stand off a little while—more pastime will be found.

Act I.—Scene 2.

Enter Actors.

Room, room, brave gallants—give us room to sport,
For in this room we wish for to resort—
Resort, and to repeat to you our merry rhyme;
For remember, good sirs, this is Christmas time.
The time to cut up goose-pies now doth appear,
So we are come to act our merry Christmas here;
At the sound of the trumpet and beat of the drum,
Make room, brave gentlemen, and let our actors come;
We are the merry actors that traverse the street,
We are the merry actors that fight for our meat;
We are the merry actors that show pleasant play,
Step in, thou King of Egypt, and clear the way.

King of Egypt—

I am the King of Egypt, as plainly doth appear,
And Prince George he is my only son and heir.
Step in, therefore, my son, and act thy part with me,
And show forth thy fame before the company.

PRINCE GEORGE—

I am Prince George, a champion *brave* and *bold*,
For with my spear I've won three crowns of gold.
'Twas I that brought the dragon to the slaughter,
And I that gained th' Egyptian Monarch's daughter.
In Egypt's fields I prisoner long was kept,
But by my valour I from them escaped:
I sounded loud at the gate of a divine,
And out came a giant of no good design;
He gave me a blow which almost struck me dead,
But I up with my sword, and cut off his head.

ALEXANDER—

Hold, slasher, hold! pray do not be so hot,
For in this spot thou knowest not who thou'st got
'Tis I that's to hash thee and smash thee as small as flies,
And send thee to Satan, to make mince pies.
Mince pies hot, mince pies cold—
I'll send thee to Satan ere thou'rt three days old.
But hold! Prince George, before you go away,
Either you or I must die this bloody day;
Some mortal wounds thou shalt receive of me—
So let us fight it out most manfully.

Act II.—Scene 1.

ALEXANDER AND PRINCE GEORGE FIGHT—THE LATTER IS WOUNDED AND FALLS.

KING OF EGYPT (*speaks*)—

Curst Christian! what is this thou hast done?
Thou hast ruined me by killing my best son.

ALEXANDER—

He gave me a challenge. How should I him deny?
And see how low he lies who was so high.

KING OF EGYPT—

O, Sambo, Sambo, help me now,
For I was never more in need,
For thee to stand with sword in hand,
And to fight at my command.

DOCTOR—

Yes, my liege, I will thee obey,
And by my sword I hope to win the day:
Yonder stands he who has killed my master's son,
And has his ruin thoughtlessly begun;
I'll try if he be sprung from Royal blood,
And through his body make an ocean flood.
Gentlemen, you see my sword's point is broke,
Or else I'd run it through that villain's throat.

KING OF EGYPT—

Is there never a doctor to be found
That can cure my son of his deadly wound?

DOCTOR—

Yes, there is a doctor to be found
That can cure your son of his deadly wound.

KING OF EGYPT—

What diseases can he cure?

DOCTOR—

All sorts of diseases,
Whatever you pleases—
The phthysic, the palsy, and gout—
If the devil were in, I'd blow him out.

KING OF EGYPT—

What is your fee?

DOCTOR—

Fifteen pounds is my fee,
The money to lay down;
But as 'tis such an one as he,
I'll cure him for ten pound.
I carry a little bottle of alicumpane;
Here, Jack, take a little of my flip-flop,
Pour it down thy lip-top,
Rise up and fight again.

[*The Doctor performs his cure as the scene closes.*

Act III.—Scene 2.

PRINCE GEORGE *arises*—(*speaks*)—

O, horrible, terrible! the like was never seen—
A man drove out of seven senses into fifteen,
And out of fifteen into four score—
O, horrible! O, terrible! the like was ne'er before.

ALEXANDER—

Thou silly ass, thou liv'st on grass;
Dost thou abuse a stranger?
I live in hopes to buy new ropes
And tie thy nose to a manger.

PRINCE GEORGE—

Sir, unto you I give my hand.

ALEXANDER—

Stand off, thou slave! Think thee not my friend!

PRINCE GEORGE—

A slave, sir! That's for me far too base a name—
That word deserves to stab thine honour's fame.

ALEXANDER—

To be stabbed, sir, is least of all my care—
Appoint your time and place, I'll meet you there.

PRINCE GEORGE—

I'll cross the water at the hour of five.

ALEXANDER—

I'll meet you there, sir, if I be alive!

PRINCE GEORGE—

But stop, sir, I'll wish you a wife, both lusty and young,
Can talk Dutch, French, and th' Italian tongue.

ALEXANDER—

I'll have none such!

PRINCE GEORGE—

Why? Don't you love your learning?

ALEXANDER—

Yes; I love my learning, as I love my life;
I love a learned scholar, but not a learned wife.
Stand off, &c. (*as before*).

KING OF EGYPT—

Sir, to express thy beauty I'm not able,
For thy face shines as the kitchen table
Thy teeth are no whiter than the charcoal, &c.

ALEXANDER—

Stand off, thou dirty dog, or by my sword thou'lt die—
I'll make thy body full of holes, and cause thy buttons fly.

Act IV.—Scene 1.

KING OF EGYPT *fights and is killed.*

Enter PRINCE GEORGE.

O, what is here? O, what is to be done?
Our King is slain—the crown is likewise gone.
Take up his body, bear it hence away,
For in this place it shall no longer stay.

Conclusion.

Bouncer! Buckler! Velvet's dear,
And Christmas comes but once a-year,
Though when it comes it brings good cheer.
But farewell, Christmas, once a year—
Farewell—farewell—adieu friendship and unity,
I hope we have made sport and pleased the company.
But, gentlemen, you see we're but actors four,
We've done our best—and the best can do no more.

End of Part I.

Part Second.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

Tableau of the Nativity—The First Carol, or Angels' Song—Revolution in Human Destiny—The Old World and the New—Christmas in the First Century of Our Lord—Origin of the Word "Carol"—Etymology of Carol—Varieties of Carols — Ecclesiastical Chants — First Musical Notation—Ambrose and his Chant—Te Deum Ambrosian—Te Deum Gregorian—Charlemagne's Hymn—Ancient Gradual—Orlando Gibbons and his Carol—Popular Religious Carols—Office of the Shepherd—Dr. Douce's Illustration of a Coventry Carol-Play—"The Three Shepherds," a Chester Mystery—Maccaronic Carols——The "Excelsis Gloria"—Legend of Joseph and the Angel—Christ's Star; was it a Comet?—Candles—Swedish Carols—English Carols—God Rest Ye, Merry Gentlemen—French Noels—"The First Noel"—The Eastern Magi—The Golden Carol—Norman Festive Carols—The English University Boar's Head—Meleager and the Calydonian Boar—Richard Cœur de Lion and his Boar's-Head Supper—Ancient Inner Temple Boar's Head Carol—"The Boar is Dead," a University Christmas Grace — Current Carols — Christians, Awake—Dr. John Byron—"Christmas Comes"—"Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"—"While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night."

> Amid the golden gifts which Heaven
> Has left, like portions of its light on earth,

None hath such influence as music hath.
The painter's hues stand visible before us
In power and beauty. We can trace the thoughts
Which are the workings of a poet's mind.
But music is a mystery, and viewless
Even when present, and is less man's act,
And less within his order: for the hand
That can call forth the tones, yet cannot tell
Whither they go, or if they live or die,
When floated once beyond his feeble ear."

L. E. L.

The Extraordinary Event of which Christmas is the anniversary, has been recognised as the cause of unbounded rejoicing, of which the festive joy hitherto described is but the smallest element. Without pretending to trench upon the province of the sacred expositor, we might seek to illuminate the opening portion of this part of our subject by the aid of a picture calculated to place it in that broad light which alone can furnish an explanation of what Christmas Carols really are.

An illumination to be found in the Harleian MS. (2877) has already done this to our hand; and yet what blazonry of beaten gold and burning colours, could suggest an adequate conception of the thrilling incident

in human history about to be related! In the azure and gold of this glorious miniature, appear before us the steep and tower-clad hills of a city near a sea whose dark blue waves seem tipped with ripples of golden light. High up in the cerulean vault besprinkled with sparkling "patines of bright gold," appears a shining angel, irradiating Heaven and earth, city and sea, turret and mountain top. But the glory is shed most abundantly on the nearest margin of the shore, where grassy plains outstretch: in the midst of which, around the red and lurid watchfires, crouch the homely forms of humble shepherds, trembling with affright and awe, bending beside the innocent figures of their unconscious flocks. Reputed artist, as well as scholar and physician,* Luke the evangelist might have painted such a scene as this: and has he not done so? see, it is a species of versification as rendered in an exquisite English version:—

* It has been pointed out to us that in the celebrated "Tract for the Times," No. 90, St. Luke is denied the reputation of artist, on the ground that none of "the Fathers" mention this. But it may safely be assumed that the art of illumination at all events was not unknown to a scribe of his era.

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

"And lo! the Angel of the Lord came upon them; and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

"And the Angel said unto them—*Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people:*

"*For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

"*And this shall be a sign unto you—ye shall find the babe wrapt in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger!*

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying—

"'GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST—ON EARTH PEACE AND GOOD WILL TOWARDS MEN!'"

The concluding words, the most benign and gracious that ever descended upon mortal ear, were the refrain or chorus of the first noel, or carol, of dawning Christianity, and it were no stretch of license to claim those we have quoted in italics as *the angelic solo* which introduced that outburst of seraphic song by the choral multitude of heaven. We only regret that never having been arranged in this manner by any composer, but always chorally, we still want a musical composition, calculated to represent dogmatically and historically this great event of ages. Is it possible to exaggerate the importance of an occurrence which it was intended,

as it has proved to be, the turning point in the world's story; or can we too earnestly scan the facts, and the manner of their revelation? For four thousand years, had man, with his wolfish instincts, preyed on his fellow man; knowing no glory but ambition, courting no justice but revenge. Conquest and empire were his avenues to despotic sway and lordly splendour; fierce contentions determined, and force adjudged the grandest prizes of the world. When dynasties arose to greatness, it was upon the groaning necks of prostrate millions that they planted their thrones; learning itself became the boast of cruel over-mastering tyrants like the swart Egyptians who employed the God-like gift of intellect, not as a means of enlightening, but of oppressing mankind. Laws, the pride of the subtle, solemn, and inexorable Mede, were ministers, not of the distribution of rights betwixt man and man, but of rivetting the chains of bondage, and pampering the luxury and pride, miscalled refinement. Greece—even Greece, saw her arts and philosophy degenerated and degraded by the grossest and most grovelling of superstitions—hero worship, and infidel Rome scoffing at religion and restraint as beneath the condescension of

"the conquerors of the world," flashed over the heads of nations the terror of the sword.

To change all this "the Angels' Song" was sung. A moment had ensued in the lull of Roman conquest when there was peace all over the world, and man awoke from his long and terrible day-dream of rapine, contention, conquest and crime, to know himself lord of a better nature. It was the dawn of a new regulating principle of life, which by the gentle breath of amenities unfelt before, proposed to alter, if possible, human nature, and did undoubtedly renovate the intelligence and aspirations of humanity. Say that Christianity and its founder came, not to introduce peace into the world, "but the sword," yet was the dust of that Eastern arena which has been the chosen battle-field of several ages, roused anew by the Crusader and the Saracen, as they grappled in deadly conflict on its sands, only to extend the knowledge and intercourse of nations, whilst the glorious songs of Tasso and Ariosto are testimonies of the high-resounding chivalry, so distinct and different from all former motives of contest, which animated the combatants. How different also in its consequences upon man and

civilisation! What a contrast are the splendid triumphs of Heraclius to the fall of Bajazet, almost as he was yet thundering at the portals of Europe, threatening to throw it back into the darkness from which it was emerging. The disasters of war were now become pioneers of civilisation. The prows of Genoa and Venice visited, not in vain, the rich havens of the east; and on giving rise to foreign commerce, originated skilled industry at home, emancipating, upon the broad basis of self-reliance and independence, the active and energetic middle classes of every land in Europe. And did men forget to what this change in their social position and prospects, their very habits of thought and modes of reasoning, their outer and their inner life was due? Did they forget that principle of faith which, far as they still might deviate from, and much as they might disregard its obligations, was still the impulsive spring of that steady progress which has led on to these enlightened times? We are now only able to judge, by such traces as we may be able to recal, of the spirit in which they celebrated the event, of which angels set the example of celebration. All this may seem like an idle theory, and the night of the dark

ages may be interposed to disprove its realisation. But is it certain that what we term the dark ages were really dark? Dark they may have been in modern science, without being dark in the simple faith of Christianity. But, testing them by their remains, their architecture with its imperishable memorials, bears evidence of taste and refinement, telling at once of talent and devotion. The deep and subtle symbolism of art, the surprising attainments of many men, and courtliness of manners in those ages, might put, in many respects, the flippancy of the present age to the blush. And whence came the songs and dances, the ineradicable traces of their rejoicings, which have lineally descended down to us in connection with the celebration of the Nativity—if not born of the irrepressible spirit of grateful acknowledgment for that great transition in human destiny, whose magnitude we can so faintly attempt to shadow forth.

But Mr. Gibbon and some other authors, affect to say that the festivities at the close of the secular, and beginning of the Christian year, are of much older date than Christianity; that they are, in fact, but lingering remnants of the *Libertas Decembri* or Roman

Saturnalia already alluded to; when children roused the towns, invoking Saturn, when nothing was seen but tables spread for feasting, nothing heard but shouts of merriment; when business was discarded, and men were expected to squander a tenth of their incomes on jollity; when all serious exertion was forbidden, and slaves were suffered to smut their masters' faces, and tell them of their faults. The Christmas Carols that were sung, could they all be quoted, would furnish the best and most conclusive answer to this, from the *first Carol*, which *is* extant, and has just been quoted, down to those others that still survive the wreck of ages. They are entirely distinctive of the occasion they celebrate. If we were bound to ascribe observances so peculiarly Christian to preceding paganism, from any resemblances of form, whilst utterly opposed in spirit, how should we propose to account for this singular superstition found to obtain amongst the red men of America? It was vulgarly credited of old, that at the hour of twelve on Christmas Eve, supposed to be about the very hour when Christ was born, the oxen knelt down in their stalls. This was in Christendom. But what will be thought

of the well-authenticated fact, that a Canadian Indian was once detected stealing out alone with the self-same expectation at the self-same hour; for on being interrogated on the subject, this simple son of nature declared that it was "Christmas night when all the deer fell down upon their knees to the Great Spirit, and looked up!"

"The Romans," says Gibbon, "as ignorant as their brethren of the real date of his birth, fixed the solemn festival to the 25th of December—the *Binmalia* or winter solstice, when the Pagans annually celebrated the birth of the sun." But this date was not fixed by the Romans any more than by the poor Red Indian, whom the news of some great event had reached and retained hold of somehow. It was a point far too intense in its interest for churchmen, long the only learned recorders of ages, to escape discussion. And the earliest writers amongst the Christian Fathers have done all they could towards attesting our Christmas Day to be *the very anniversary* of the Nativity. In the time of Clement, in the year A.D. 70, Christmas is thus known to have been observed on the 25th of December. He writes: "Brethren, keep diligently

feast days, and truly, *in the first place*, the day of Christ's birth." The injunction would have been made to little purpose had any doubt about the day existed. But even a difference of opinion on the subject does not seem to have been surmised. And the day once observed, from year to year, how was a deviation to arise? A century after the time of Clement, it was ordained that "in the night of the Nativity of our blessed Lord and Saviour, they do celebrate public church services, *and in them solemnly sing* THE ANGELS' HYMN," because also the same night he was declared unto the shepherds by an angel, as the truth itself doth witness. Accordingly two recent German writers have brought to light, with all the indomitable acumen with which their countrymen often devote themselves to difficult or obscure research, the import of two family groups of sculptures on a large sarcophagus, where the individuals represented, are seen uniting in a song of praise on the occasion of the Nativity, the scrolls of music in their hands giving a far higher date than had been previously imagined to the existence of musical notation. This sarcophagus is a monument of the second century. Again, in the

fourth, St. Chrysostom preached a sermon on Christmas, which is still extant, though, of course, one thousand five hundred years old. He bears strong testimony to the accuracy of the traditional date. But the learned Fabricius, having collected in his time all the opinions that had been expressed upon the subject, deduced therefrom this plain inference that the birth of Christ must have happened one year and six months before the death of Herod. Now, the day of Herod's death is an ascertained date in history.

The import of the word Christmas, as well as its date, has been indeed disputed—some attributing it to the mass that was said on Christmas Day, in which case it could not have arisen until after there were masses to say; but the Roman Catholic writers generally waive this point, and admit the derivation to be from *Christus missæ*—from the sending of Christ. French writers term it Noel (tidings), or "the day of tidings."

The term Carol has, of all, the most doubtful origin. Lexicographers have agreed upon its possible derivation from the Italian, strongly suggesting, however, a far more probable derivation from the Welsh. One

thing may be said of each etymon, which, so far as we are aware, cannot be predicated of any other, that it accords in euphony with the term. Whereas, although it might be thought that, if Italian, the word must have a Latin origin, there are no words in the Latin nearer than *Choreola*, *Choraules*, &c., having, besides the difference of orthography, in each instance applications which raise a doubt of their identity in signification; and, of course, χορος (*Chorus*), &c., in the Greek are liable to the same objections. These objections, at the same time, are by no means so serious that they might not be overcome were the Welsh word *Carawl* not a preferable root. We have consulted one of the best living authorities—the Rev. William Barnes, B.D., author of "Notes on Ancient Britain and the British"*—on this subject, and subjoin his opinion, that the root is neither Latin nor Teutonic—a verdict in which we confess ourselves now disposed to acquiesce. "A *Carol* or *Caroll*," says Mr. Barnes, in a communication to the author, "in the sense of a hymn or Christmas Carol, is given in the '*Promp-*

* London, J. Russell Smith, 1858.

torium Parvulerium,' an English-Latin vocabulary, written by a Monk of Lynn, A.D. 1440;* and the Welsh language has '*Carawl*,' a Carol, and 'Carawl kaf—a may-zong,' for the British festival of summer. The word Carol seems to be Celtic, as it is not Latin or Teutonic, and may have gotten into French and

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* *Promptorium Parvulerum Sive Clericorum, Lexican Anglo-Latinum Princeps, Auctore Fratre-Galpido, Grammatico Dicto Epredicatoribus, Lenne Episcopi Northfolciensi. A.D., Circa, MDCCCXL. Londini: Sumptitus Societatis Camdenensis*, 1843. The following is the definition in this curious reprint, together with the note of the learned editor, Albert Way, Esq.:—CARAL, songe (Caroll, P.) Palenodium, UG. in Paluri (psalmodium, psalmodinacio, K.) The foot reference by the editor says:—"A Caralle, *Corea, Chorus*, 'CATH. ANGL.' Carole, a Song. *Carolle*, Chanson de Noël, PALSG. A. SAX., Kyrriole, a chanting at the Nativity." In explanation of these various references we may be allowed to state that, upon consulting the learned monk's preface, it appears that P. indicates the Promptorium itself, and may be taken for his own original authority, based, as he tells us, upon a knowledge of words common in Norfolk, and known to him both in youth and riper age. UG. is a contraction for "Ugentio in majori volumine." K. signifies another version of the Promptorium, CATH. ANG. in the note, a highly valuable MS., dated 1483, consisting of a Latin and English dictionary, wholly distinct from the Promptorium, written apparently in the North-East parts of England, and cited as the Catholica Anglicum; whilst PALS. means the curious work of John Palsgrave, entituled, "Eclaircessement de la langue Françoyse," 1530.

Italian, like some other words, from the speech of the Gauls. Among the relics of the Celtic-Cornish language are some Christmas 'Carols,' which must have been written when the British language was spoken in Cornwall, before the time of Elizabeth." The earliest English Carol, extant under that name is "a Carolle of Huntynge," by Dame Juliana Berners, Prioress of St. Albans, borne at the end of the fourteenth century (1378), and who cannot be proved to have been alive after 1460, although her "Carolle" did not appear in print till 1486, when it was first imprinted by Wynkyn de Worde. The import of this evidence, respecting the origin and use of the word Carol as applied to Christmas songs or hymns of the Nativity, is clearly adverse, therefore, to the suggestion of a distinguished critic in the *Athenæum*, that the period at which the word Carol was first applied to a song was during the captivity in England of the French Poet, Charles duc d'Orleans, made prisoner on the field of Agincourt (1415), and that from his name Charles, the term *Carol* came to be applied, not only to his own songs, but to the Christmas songs also, that

had been sung before him. If the references now given to the etymology be consulted, it must appear very probable that the word Carol was, however, in common use, as applied not only to a song, but more expressly to a Christmas song, prior to the time of Charles d' Orleans. We need lay no stress on the curious Anglo-Saxon form in which it is given, in the note of Mr. Albert Way, since Kyrriole (now like the ancient *Kyrie!*) might have been in use after, as well as before. But the monk of Lynn appears to have found it current in Norfolk in his youth. He wrote his work in 1440, and must at that time have been a man of more than twenty-five years of age, which would bring back his memory to the period of Duke Charles's captivity. But then the gay French captive did not write his Anglo-Norman *Chansons* till *after* 1415; and moreover the word must *long before* have been *common* in Norfolk, where Brother Geoffry then picked it up! The *Athenæum* states also that it is only in subsequent works, those of St. Beuve and of Laurentie, and not in his own time that "the most serious and touching lays of Charles are CLASSED

UNDER *Carolles*." Here then is an admission that there were previously such things as *Carolles*, under which to class them; and it may very well be surmised that Carol was a term given, if given at all, to the songs of Charles, not by himself, but long afterwards by others, consequently the interval which would necessarily elapse ere this could happen, would appear to be quite fatal to his title to be regarded as sponsor to the word. We abandon, indeed, the supposed Latin or Italian origin, although, as already said, the assent of many lexicographers has been given to that idea. The facts of Ferrari, in his "*Origines Linguæ Italicæ*," defining Carola (the Italian word) as "a dance," from *Choreola*, having the same signification, of Ledler saying the same thing in German, "Carola bedeutet einen Tanz;" and of Forcellini, going to the Greek Chorus, describing it as "Saltatio cum Cantu" (dancing with song), all as pointed out in the *Athenæum*, are therefore nothing more than seems to be disclosed by a consultation of the classics, and of no relevancy whatever, if the word be neither Latin nor Teutonic. Thus, *Chorus*, in

Latin, meant sometimes both singing and dancing together, sometimes either and sometimes neither, as,

"Utque viro Phœbi *chorus* assurexerit omnis."
VIRG. ECL., 6, 66.

And in Statius Achil. I., 6432, where it signifies an ordinary assembly :—

"Risit *chorus* omnis ab alto astrorum?"

As well as in Horace (Ep. ii., 2, 27) :—

"Scriptorum *chorus* omnis amat nemus."

It must be said, however, that something very much resembling the modern word is found in Martial, 5, 56, 11, where he refers to a minstrel playing on a pipe :—

"Fac discat Ctharœdus aut *choraules*."

Leaving the philology to be further expiscated in the direction now indicated, which we feel assured will prove to be the right one, we find that our own authors familiarly use the term Carol to signify a song of joy or exultation. Thus, in Spenser's Epithalamium, it is said :—

"And let the Graces dance unto the rest,
For they can do it best;
The whiles the maidens do their carol sing,
To which the woods shall answer and their echoes ring."

In the stately prose of Bacon, we have the term employed by implication, and in the way of contrast, to intimate the very spirit of gaiety :—

"Even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as *Carols*."

Whilst in Dryden we have this :—

"Opposed to her, on t'other side advance
The costly feast, *the Carol*, and the dance ;
Minstrels and music, poetry and play,
And balls by night and tournaments by day.

Shakespeare and Milton, however, regard the Carol as purely a song of devotion :—

"No night is now with *hymn or carol blest*,"

laments the one—

"They gladly thither haste, and by a choir
Of squadroned angels hear *His Carol sung*,"

exclaims the other; but the word ere then had arrived at its current signification.

To advance, however, from words to things, it will be found that Christmas Carols resolve into three distinct varieties, which may be called,

1. The Ecclesiastical.
2. The Popular, and
3. The Festive.

The first, indeed, are purely religious Church services, the foundation of all the rest; the next religious in purpose, however grotesque or playful in form; and the last of all, songs which, like that of "The Boar's Head," must ever be identified with Christmas festivities, without being very sensibly devotional in spirit.

I. ECCLESIASTICAL CHAUNTS.

The Te Deum.

If we are asked why we class the Te Deum, that ancient hymn of adoration, one of the most sublime and beautiful, as well as antique in the ritual of Christianity, as a Christmas Carol? we ask in answer, and is it not a Christmas Carol, one of the most glorious ever hymned in acknowledgment of Christ's divinity? The musical history of the chaunts connected with it, are, however, the foundation of our present remarks. The "Ambrosian Te Deum," for example, so called from the tradition of its having been composed, the words by St. Augustine and the music by St. Ambrose (the latter of whom died so early as 397), arose during a scene of great excitement in Milan. In that ancient cathedra

city, Ambrose, even before he had been baptised, although in his thirty-fourth year, was called, as is well known by the popular voice to the arch-episcopate. He flourished in the joint reign of the Emperors Theodosius and Valentinian. Unfortunately the empress of the latter sovereign, an Arian, took a fancy to reside in Milan. There was no place for her; but forth went the mandate of the Emperor Theodosius, directing the Portian Church, and afterwards the new Basilica, to be prepared for the reception of the lady, who was his mother. Ambrose, believing like a true bishop of the Church, that if the palaces of earth belonged to Cæsar, the churches were the houses of God, resisted the arrangement altogether, and roused the citizens against the imperial sacrilege. Accordingly when a large and sanguinary horde of Goths marched in to occupy the Basilica, they were opposed on the threshold by the intrepid man of God. The thunders of ecclesiastical excommunication effectually deterred, in that age, even Roman mercenaries from an invasion of the sanctuary. The Arian ministers, nevertheless, watched their opportunity, and had sentence of banishment pronounced

against Ambrose. The archbishop declined obedience. The faithful people guarded the person of their prelate, shut the gates of the cathedral, and secured the episcopal palace against assaults from without; nor could the imperial troops be induced to incur the risk of attacking a fortress defended by spiritual authority. It was whilst the people were occupied in watching the church by night, that Ambrose is said to have appointed psalms and hymns to be sung, after the manner of the Oriental churches, lest they should pine away, as he expressed it, with the tediousness of sorrow. Then it was that *tradition* alleges this "Te Deum laudamus," with which Christians in all subsequent ages have been so familiar, to have been composed.

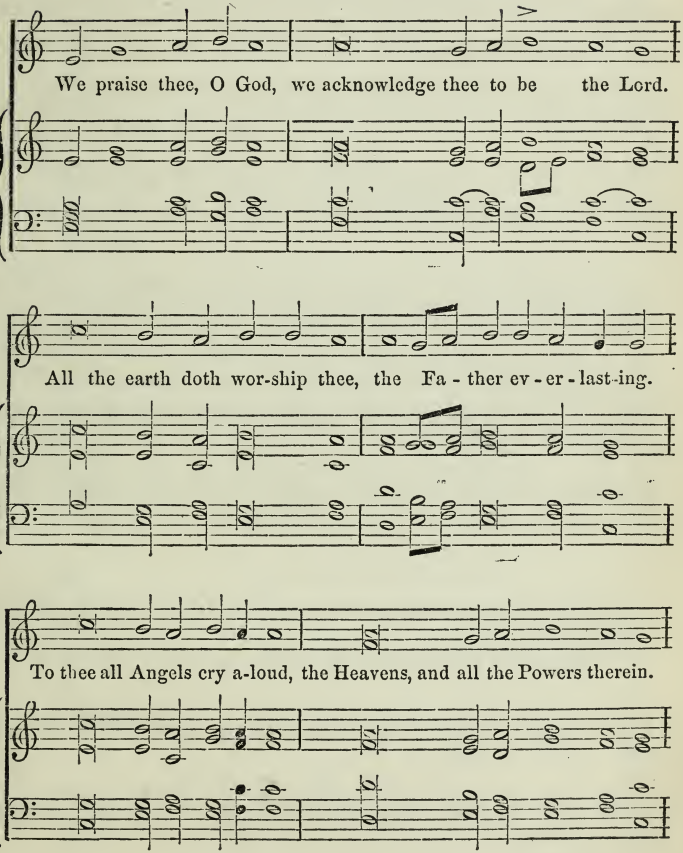
There is certainly some doubt concerning this tradition. It is in truth tolerably certain that it must be an error. The learned Dr. Usher adduces the testimony of two ancient MSS., shewing the "Te Deum" to have in reality been made by Nicetus, Bishop of Triers, about the year 500 A.D., almost a century subsequent to the deaths both of Ambrose and Augustine! The Benedictine editors of the works of St.

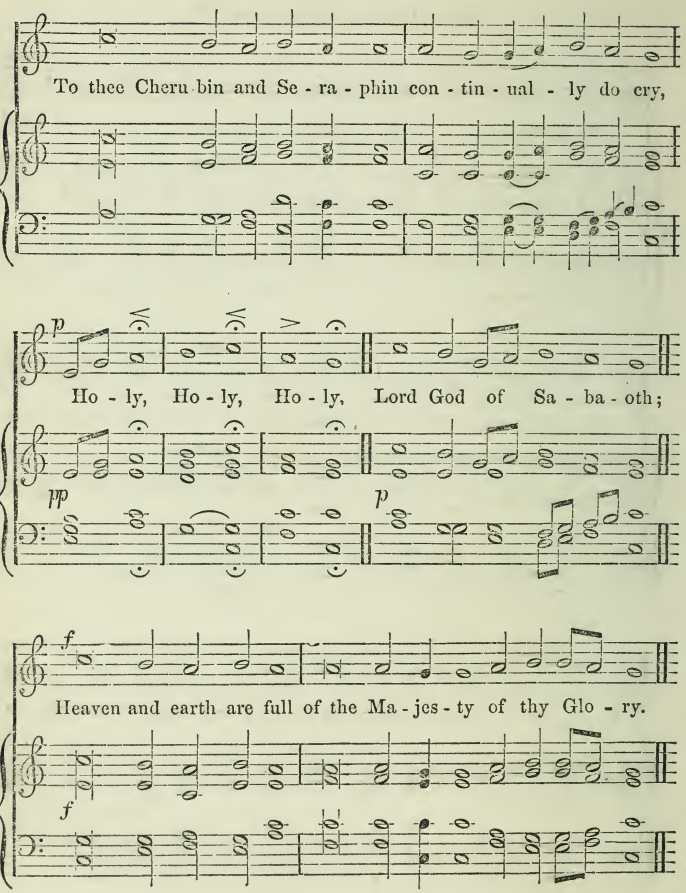
Ambrose, also believe him *not* to have been its author; and Drs. Cave and Stillingfleet concur in holding that the "Te Deum" was neither the production of St. Ambrose nor of St. Augustine, jointly or separately.

That the zeal of St. Ambrose, nevertheless, led to the institution of that grand old massive piece of ecclesiastical song, the "Cantus Ambrosianus, or Ambrosian Chaunt," is altogether undeniable. His design in the structure of this great musical production was to introduce into the Church a melody so plain and simple in its nature, that, although founded on the rules of art, a whole congregation might join in singing it. As usual in earnest efforts of genius, he gained in sublimity as he gained in simplicity. He had recourse to the modes of the ancients to achieve his purpose. Not to those of the Greeks, for the Greek modulations were adapted to the language of their poets, who composed not merely the words, but the—sing-song we might term it more properly than—music; and thus they had scarcely a strain of grandeur amidst all the ceremonies of their religion, their triumphs, or their theatres. But it was to Ptolemy he

had recourse, as he there found seven species of diapason or modes, and of these selecting four, the Dorian, the Phrygian, the Lydian, and Mixo-Lydian, which he designated in Greek πρωτος, deuteros, tritos, and tetrartos—simply first, second, third, and fourth—he discarded all above four tones as superfluous. It was not for nearly a century and a half afterwards, as will presently be shewn, that the octave was completed by St. Gregory, surnamed the Great. In listening to the "Te Deum," as chaunted or rather sung in unison, therefore, on the Ambrosian system of notation, the only system existing at the date of its composition so far as now known (the notation of the second century seen on the sarcophagus mentioned by the German authorities above alluded to being undetermined), we must regard and cite it as the foundation of all modern church, and indeed other music; and ought to remember that we owe the cultivation of music, therefore, as a science to the body of singers or *vsalmistæ*, at this period set apart for the practice of the ecclesiastical chaunt.

TE DEUM AMBROSIAN.

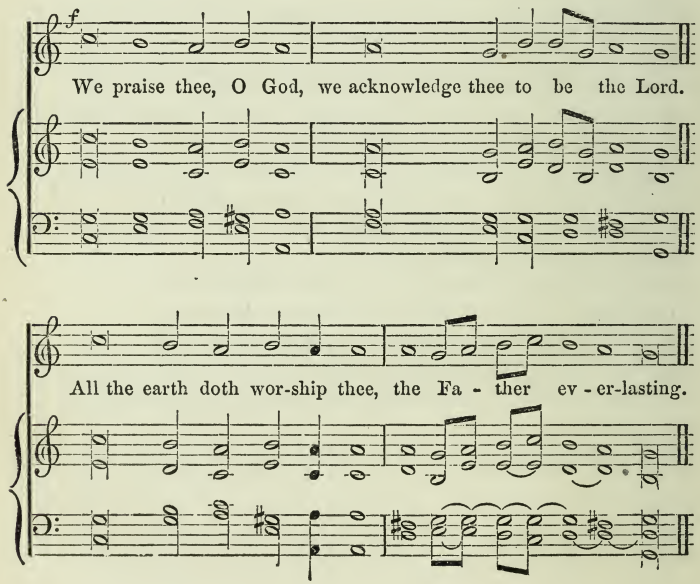

We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth wor-ship thee, the Fa - ther ev - er - last-ing.
To thee all Angels cry a-loud, the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.

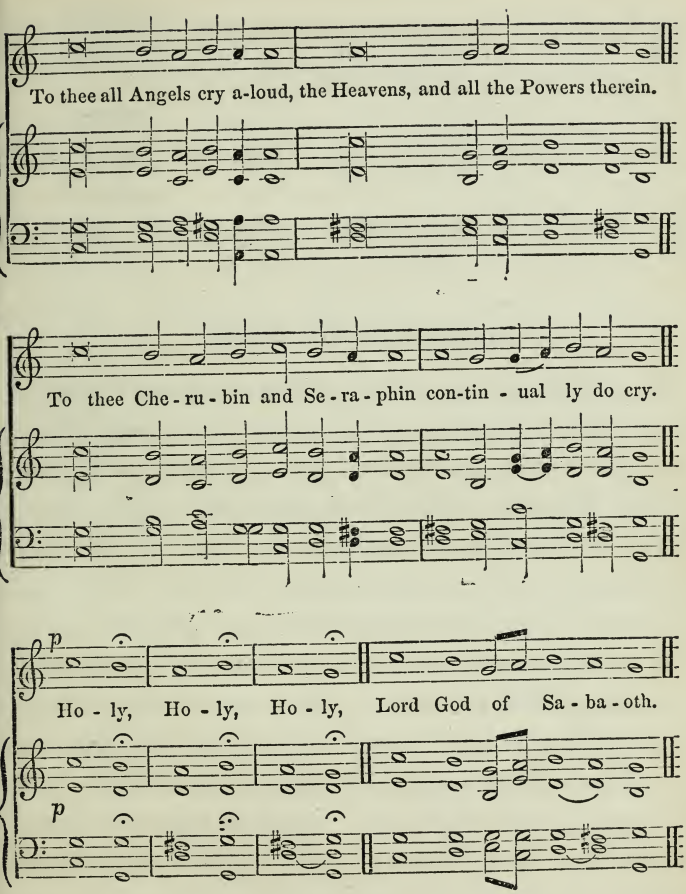

To thee Cheru bin and Se - ra - phin con - tin - ual - ly do cry,
p
Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Lord God of Sa - ba - oth;
pp
p
f
Heaven and earth are full of the Ma - jes - ty of thy Glo - ry.
f

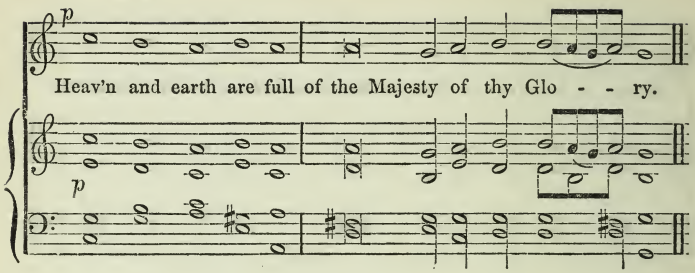
The glorious company of the Apostles: praise Thee!
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets: praise Thee!
The noble Army of Martyrs: praise Thee!
The Holy Church throughout all the world: doth acknowledge Thee!
The Father: of an infinite Majesty;
Thine honourable, true: and only son;
Also, the Holy Ghost: the Comforter.
Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ!
Thou art the Everlasting Son: of the Father.
When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man: thou did'st not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When thou had'st overcome the sharpness of death: thou did'st open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.
We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge;
We therefore pray Thee help Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.
Make them to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting.
O, Lord, save Thy people: and bless Thine heritage!
Govern them; and lift them up for ever.
Day by day: we magnify thee;
And we worship Thy name: ever world without end.
Vouchsafe, O Lord: to keep us this day without sin.
O, Lord! have mercy upon us: have mercy upon us!
O, Lord! let thy mercy lighten upon us: as our trust is in Thee!
O, Lord! in Thee I have trusted: let me never be confounded!

TE DEUM GREGORIAN.

Simply to illustrate without further remark, the effect of the improvements in musical notation, introduced 130 years subsequently, by Gregory the Great, in the augmentation of the four tones of St. Ambrose to eight, by the insertion of four other tones between them, we annex the Gregorian tones also :—




To thee all Angels cry a-loud, the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.
To thee Che-ru-bin and Se-ra-phin con-tin-ual ly do cry.
p
Ho-ly, Ho-ly, Ho-ly, Lord God of Sa-ba-oth.
p



CHARLEMAGNE'S HYMN.

The development of the subject leads us to introduce as the next stage in the music of heavenly adoration, that very celebrated piece known as Charlemagne's Hymn—"*Veni Creator Spiritus.*" The solemn strains of this hymn transport us back to the commencement of the ninth century; and we must suppose that during the interval that had elapsed, Christian worship had been maintained by the Ambrosian and Gregorian Chaunts. Then arose that colossal figure in European history, the Emperor Charles the Great, or Charlemagne, struggling as bravely for knowledge as for dominion. His intellectual struggles indeed must have been the more terrible of the two.

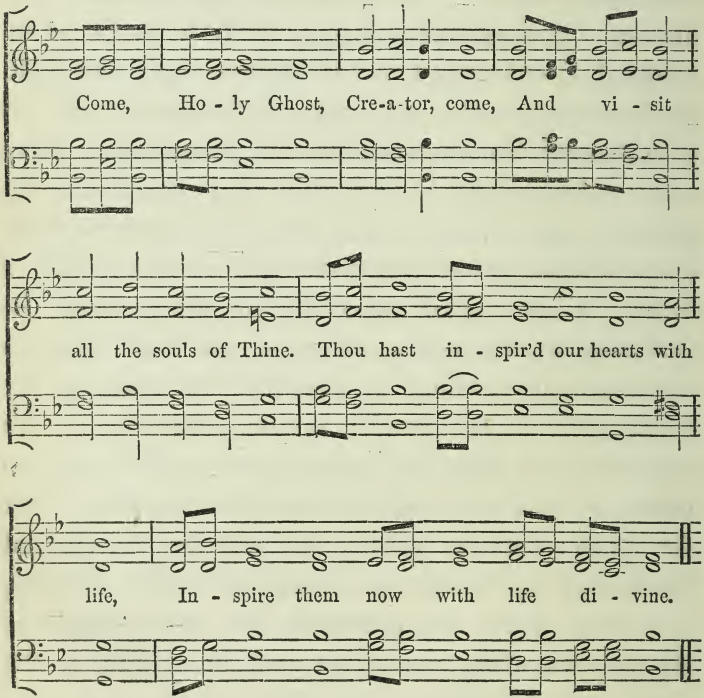
The density of human ignorance in his age of the world, appears to have rendered the very contemplation of study appalling. And although the mighty emperor never perfectly acquired the art of writing his own name, it was not from any defect of education, but somehow the effort required for such a purpose seems to have been in those days most tremendous. When he was older, perhaps, than the majority of our readers, he was still the daily scholar of seven masters who laboured to enlighten and instruct him in polite learning. Whatever we may think of his attainments in literature; as the composer of this magnificent hymn at such a period of the world, he assuredly lives in human respect as a grand musician. Musical composition, it is true, may be accomplished on mechanical principles. Sir Isaac Newton, who could not execute a note, was the mathematical composer of an air. But Charlemagne, like many princes of his time, indeed, was sufficiently gifted to be able to don the surplice and take his place in the church choir.

Thus imbued with the love, and addicted to the practice of music, Charlemagne devoted all possible

care to the formation of good musicians. At his request, Pope Adrian I. sent into France twelve excellent singers, corresponding, as their idea was, to the number of the twelve apostles. The story goes, that on their way they laid a plot to mar instead of mend, the Gregorian Chaunt, supposed by this time to have been corrupted, and almost lost throughout the French empire. Having been received with great honour, and distributed amongst different stations in all parts of France, the confusion therefore became worse confounded, as they were each teaching a different chaunt. The emperor, however, happened to be too well skilled in music to tolerate such a deceit. He had heard the Gregorian Chaunt at Treves, where he had passed his Christmas; and at Metz it had been performed in all its perfection in his presence. He consequently porformed a tour of all the churches in which the false apostles conducted their discordant services, insisted on their recal, and procured their condemnation to banishment—in some instances, to perpetual imprisonment.

The French church music was reformed by two singers, sent subsequently into that country.

Personally, the author of the "Veni Creator," was in all respects a giant. Son of King Pepin, he was born in Germany in 769 A.D. His father had, strange to say, been surnamed "the little," on account of his diminutive stature. But nature avenged the defect, in his son. If Archbishop Turpin, his historian, is to be credited, Charlemagne was in stature eight feet high, his face a span and a half long, his forehead a foot in breadth, and his body and bones in proportion. Here was a noble paladin! Nor did his powers belie his person. Into every undertaking he seems to have entered with all the preponderating energy of such a frame. With regard especially to music, which he evidently loved, and in which, as we have seen, he was eminently skilled, he manifested his zeal in the endowment of foundations for its cultivation in the university of Paris, an institution, by the way, of which he was the original founder altogether. For the study of music, theory and practice, throughout his dominions, he likewise founded schools. Finally, as noticed above, he personally set the example to princes, and always sung his part at church, in the choral service; whilst, at home, he entertained masters

imparting proficiency to his daughters for three hours every day. The well-known words of the translation sung to Charlemagne's hymn, are, we believe, those of our great English poet, John Dryden :—

Come, Ho - ly Ghost, Cre-a-tor, come, And vi - sit
all the souls of Thine. Thou hast in - spir'd our hearts with
life, In - spire them now with life di - vine.

Thou art the comforter, the gift
Of God most high; the fire of love,
The everlasting spring of joy,
And holy unction from above.

Thy gifts are manifold; Thou writ'st
God's laws in ev'ry faithful heart;
The promise of the Father—Thou
Dost heavenly eloquence impart.

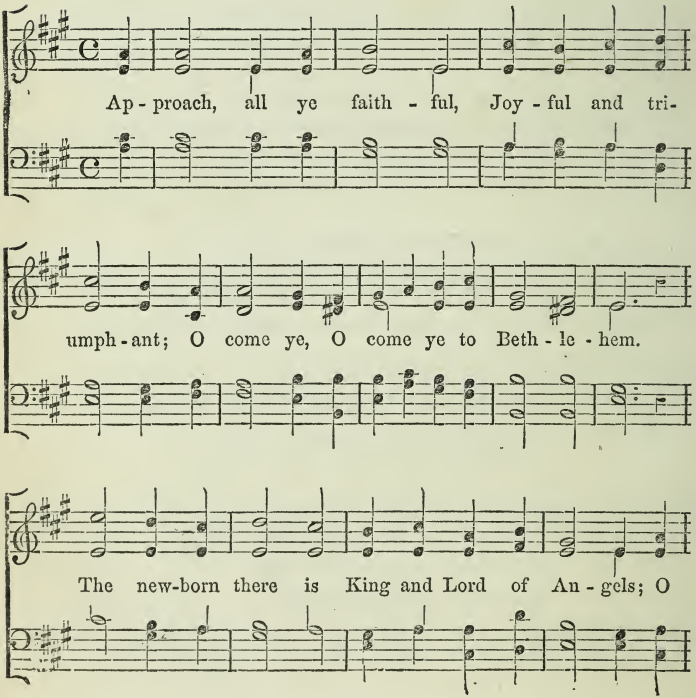
Enlighten our dark souls till they
Thy love, thy heavenly love embrace;
And (since we are by nature frail)
Assist us with Thy saving grace.

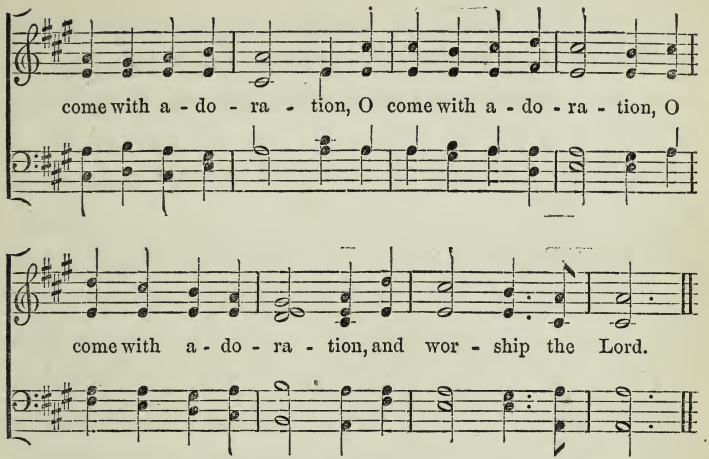
Drive far from us the mortal foe,
And grant us to have peace within;
That, with Thy light and guidance blest,
We may escape the snares of sin.

Teach us the Father to confess,
And Son, who from the grave revived;
And with the Father and the Son,
The Holy Ghost from both derived.

With Thee, O Father, therefore may
The Son who was from death restor'd,
And sacred Comforter, one God,
To endless ages be adored.

FIRST ECCLESIASTICAL CAROL,

"ADESTE FIDELES," OR PORTUGUESE HYMN.

Ap - proach, all ye faith - ful, Joy - ful and tri-
umph - ant; O come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem.
The new-born there is King and Lord of An - gels; O



It is more in default of any legitimate specimens of Christmas Carols, of the age of the several preceding illustrations, than as holding them to belong strictly to that class of adoration, that we have now presented the leading features of sacred song throughout a long stretch of the Christian era. Nevertheless these examples stand for the traces of heavenly praise as raised within the bosom of the Church. The "Adeste Fideles" (literally "approach ye faithful") is, however, a genuine Christmas Hymn or Carol, and being at the same time an ecclesiastical chaunt, the object of our

deducing the latter in regular sequence from the earliest times, will be perceptible. But although the Portuguese Hymn, as this marvellously beautiful composition is called, be commonly put as plain-chant, it seems altogether difficult to regard the intervals to be found in it, and the perfection of scale in the exquisite melody, as coming properly under that designation. There are actually in the "Adeste Fideles," more notes than in genuine plain chant, and these more regular, too, in their succession. This Carol deserves the first place, as that more commonly employed in public worship, even at the present day. It is claimed by the Roman Catholics, as peculiarly their own; and a recent writer of that school tells that in the city of York, a year or two ago, he witnessed in the Catholic school-room, the representation of a stable, in which was introduced all the great events of the Nativity, with groups of children singing what he calls "our beautiful Carol, the 'Adeste Fideles'"

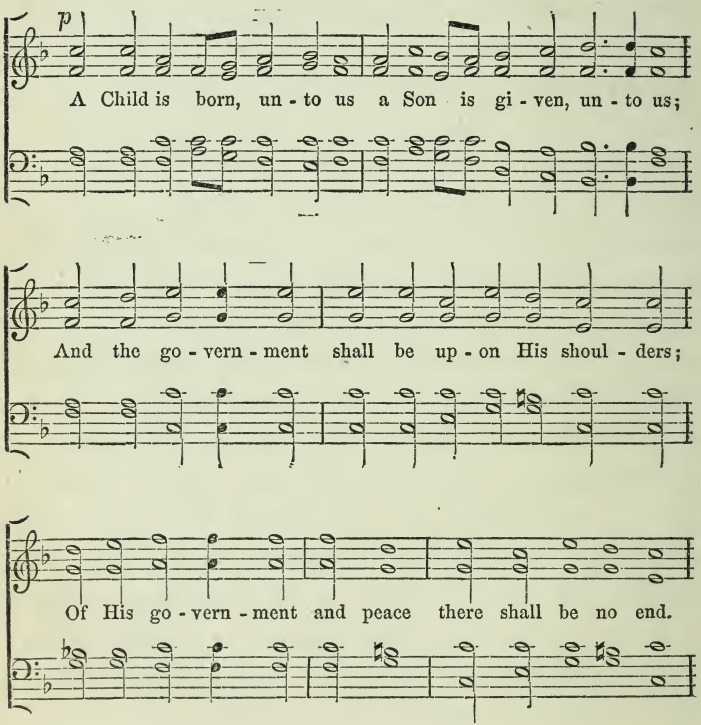
No Carol is in more universal use. A Christmas or two ago, we heard it finely rendered by the choir of Mr. North's Miners, at Cinder Hill Church, near Basford Hall, Notts. They called it "one of Mr.

Fyfe's Carols"—alluding to its introduction into a lecture delivered by the Author to an audience of 1,100 at Nottingham Mechanics' Institute.

As farther illustrative of these ancient ecclesiastical chaunts, whence, as we shall perceive—partly from portions of them still retained as refrains of the popular Carols, partly from other traditionary circumstances—the vulgar Carols are clearly deducible; we now proceed to offer another specimen, whose origin is however lost in the recesses of antiquity. It is the ancient INTROIT (he enters) or Gradual, chanted as the priest, entering from a side door in the chancel, bent his steps towards the altar, in the communion service. In the Latin service, this superb old strain is known from its commencing words "Puer Natus est" (a Son is born), and is invariably used and recognised as the ancient Introit for Christmas-day. The music is ancient plain-song, and we present the words and arrangement, as kindly prepared for us by Mr. J. H. Turpin, the able organist of St. Barnabas' Roman Catholic cathedral, Nottingham, the words having been newly translated from the Latin, by Mr. Turpin, for the sake of adaptation to the music.

ANCIENT GRADUAL FOR CHRISTMAS DAY.

"Puer Natus Est."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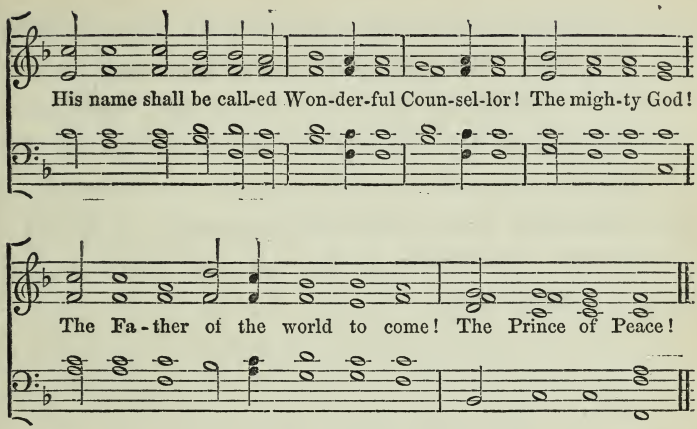
A Child is born, un - to us a Son is gi - ven, un - to us;
And the go - vern - ment shall be up - on His shoul - ders;
Of His go - vern - ment and peace there shall be no end.



How far Handel, in his magnificent composition, adapted nearly to the same words, in the oratorio of the *Messiah*, has been indebted to this ancient Gradual, and undoubted Ecclesiastical Christmas Carol, with its grave and glorious antiquity, every one now may readily surmise. The quick movement in the third line he has obviously seized, as well as the grand forte passage, "Wonderful! Counsellor! the Mighty God!" no doubt with a power and effect which no one who has heard them at the Crystal

Palace Handel Festival ever can forget; and to which every one who has *not* heard them executed to the measured success of Costa's baton, and with the obedient pauses of a musical discipline, drilled to the last syllable of perfection amidst a choir of more than three thousand voices, most certainly ought to embrace the earliest opportunity of hearing performed in the highest possible style.

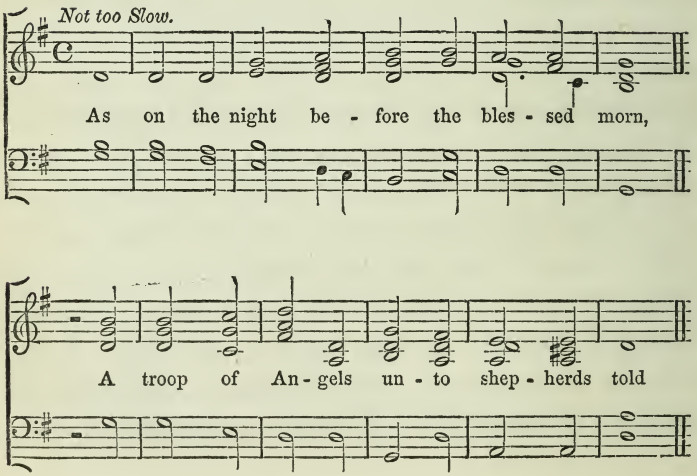
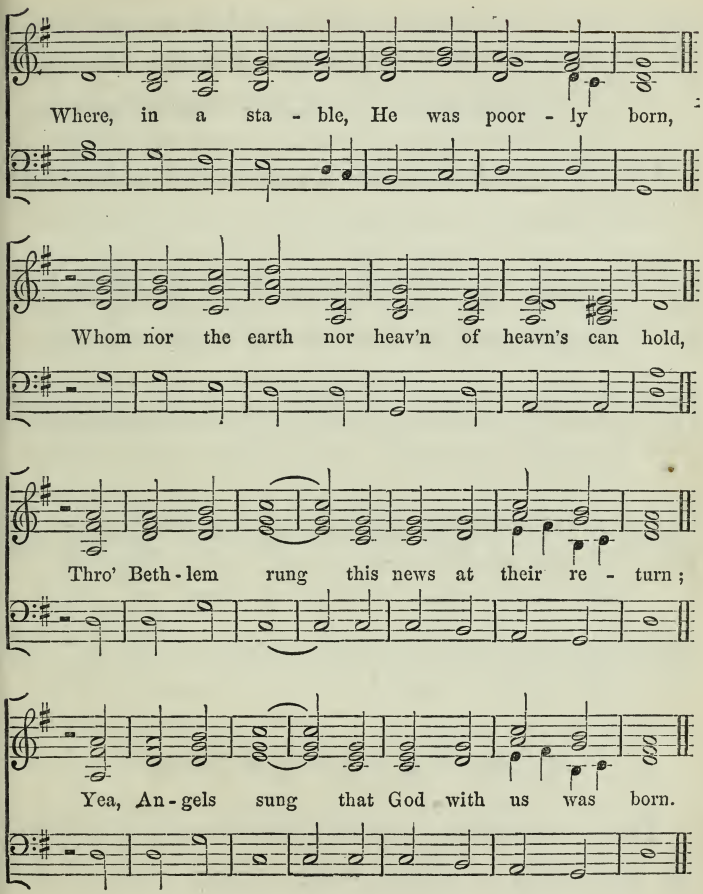
ORLANDO GIBBONS' CAROL.

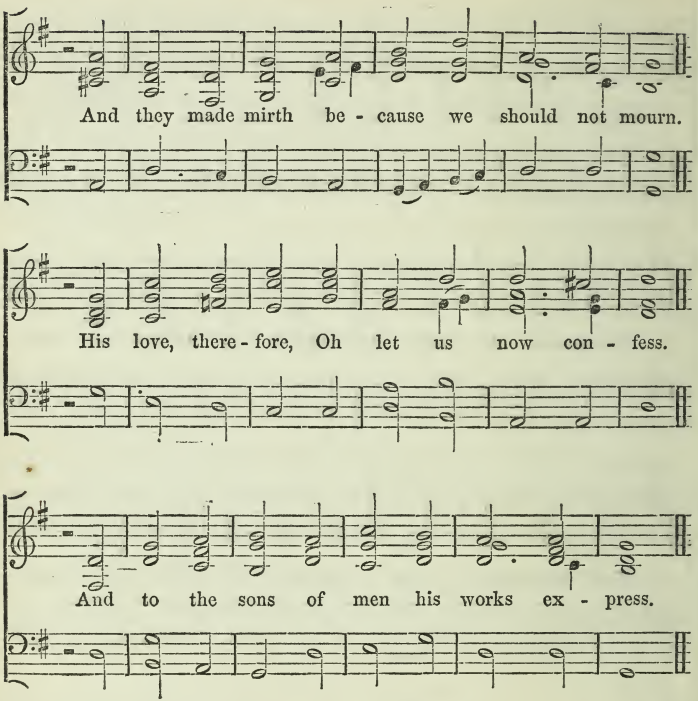
In deducing the Church Carol to comparatively modern times, we cannot conclude with a more admired or more neglected specimen than the stately and reverential melody, "As on the Night before the blessed Morn," by that early lost musician, Orlando Gibbons, the Palestrina of England, the restorer and enricher of the musical services of our Church. Orlando Gibbons must, indeed, be regarded as the great church writer of music in this country; perhaps

as the greatest of this class that ever lived. Born at Cambridge in 1583, he found himself at the age of twenty-one, organist of the Chapel Royal, in London. He died on Whit-Sunday, 1625, having caught the small-pox, that scourge of days preceding those of Lady Mary Wortley Montague and Dr. Edward Jenner, whilst at Canterbury, attending in his official capacity the marriage ceremony of King Charles I. and Queen Henrietta, for which occasion he had just composed the cathedral music. His place of sepulture in the cathedral church is dignified by a monument to his memory, erected by his widow. He had published five-part madrigals in 1612; but our cathedral books still contain unpublished the most excellent of his compositions—the Services and Anthems—one of his anthems, "The Hosanna," being indeed regarded as amongst the most perfect examples of the church style of music. As stated in a dedication to James I., Orlando Gibbons likewise composed those excellent two-part melodies to the hymns and songs of the Church, and adapted to the English translations of that true poet of Christmas in the seventeenth century,

whose pictorial Christmas pages we have already quoted—old George Wither. As may be surmised, the music of Orlando Gibbons is altogether characterised by its sweet and glorious harmony, but still there runs an indefinably exquisite melody through the following—

AS ON THE NIGHT.



Where, in a sta - ble, He was poor - ly born,
Whom nor the earth nor heav'n of heavn's can hold,
Thro' Beth - lem rung this news at their re - turn;
Yea, An - gels sung that God with us was born.

And they made mirth be - cause we should not mourn.
His love, there - fore, Oh let us now con - fess.
And to the sons of men his works ex - press.

II.—POPULAR RELIGIOUS CAROLS.

There can be little question that the curious practice of itinerating, or going about singing carols of the

Nativity, on Christmas Eve, originated in the example set by the performers of the ancient masks or plays already discussed called "Mysteries and Moralities;" as they indeed have been shewn to have sprung from the traditionary—we had almost said hereditary—performances of the wandering sons of Thespis in a cart. We have shewn, too, the pitch of degradation at which the sacred drama may be said to have arrived in the mock play of "Alexander king of Egypt." In the churches themselves, however, there was anciently something resembling these would-be scenic representations of the events of the Nativity. Thus, in Rouen cathedral, after the *Te Deum* in the nocturnal office or vigil of Christmas, the ecclesiastics were accustomed to celebrate what they called "THE OFFICE OF THE SHEPHERD."

The image of the VIRGIN MARY was placed in a stable prepared behind the altar, a boy, from above, placed before the choir, in the guise of an Angel, announced the Nativity to certain canons or vicars, as they entered, underneath, in the quality of shepherds. As they passed through the great door of the choir clothed in tunics and amasses, many more boys

stationed in the lofty vaulting of the church then began the "Gloria in Excelsis," on hearing which, the shepherds advanced, singing the corresponding words of "Peace and Good Will." As soon as they had entered in, two priests clad in dalmatics, as if representing women (*quasi obstetrices*, as the old record bears), and as if stationed in the stable, inquired, "Whom seek ye?" The shepherds thereupon answered, according to the angelic annunciation, "Our Saviour, Christ." The pretended women then opened the curtain, saying, "The little one is here, as the prophet Isaiah said." Then they showed the mother, saying, "Behold the virgin!" Upon this the shepherds bowed, and worshipped the boy and saluted the mother. The office terminated with their return to the choir, singing "Alleluia." Thus was the Carol of the Nativity, both acted and sung in the ancient churches.

Dr. Douce refers, amongst the Christmas plays of Coventry, to an "illustration" of a Carol sung by the shepherds on the birth of Christ. It is a sheet of Carols, headed "Christus Natus Est" (Christ is born). A wood-cut, ten inches high by eight inches and a half wide, represents the stable at Bethlehem, Christ in the

crib,* watched by the Virgin and Joseph, shepherds kneeling, angels attending, a man playing on the bagpipes, a woman with a basket of fruit on her head, a sheep in the act of bleating, an ox lowing on the ground, a raven croaking, and a crow cawing on the hayrack, a cock crowing above them, and angels singing in the sky—all with labels bearing Latin inscriptions in their mouths, with the following relative description extending down the side of the woodcut:—

"A religious man inventing [finding] the concerts of the birds and beasts drawn in the picture of our Saviour's birth, doth thus express them:—

The Cock (Croweth)—"*Christus natus est*"—"Christ is born."
The Raven (Asketh)—"*Quando?*"—"When?"
The Crow (Replyeth)—"*Hac nocte*"—"This night."
The Ox (Cryeth out)—"*Ubi? Ubi?*"—"Where? Where?"
The Sheep (Bleateth out)—"Bethlehem."
A Voice from Heaven (Soundeth)—"*Gloria in Excelsis*"—"Glory in the Highest."

Dr. Douce gives the imprint of this "curiosity of

* In the "Legenda Aurea" (Golden Legend) the manger in which our Saviour was laid is termed a crybbe, or racke; in the Wyclifite version it is called a cratche.—*Luke*, xi., 7.

literature"—[London, printed and sold by J. Bradford, in Little Britain, over and against the pump, 1701, price one penny.]

Amongst the "Chester Mysteries," likewise, we have the record of a play called "The Three Shepherds," into which a spice of absurdity is infused by the addition to the *dramatis personæ* of Trowle, a buffoon. The rude, homely dialogue, interspersed with wrestling feats and feasts of sheeps'-heads soused in ale, is interrupted by the appearance of a star in the East, which causes the sport to be reverently relinquished, and ultimately offerings to be presented, in these words, to the infant Saviour at Bethlehem:—

Heale! King of Heaven so hie,
  Born in a crebe,
Mankind unto thee
  Thou haste made fullye.

Heale King! born in a mayden's bower,
Proffites did tell thou should be our succoure.
  Thus clarkes doth saye,
Lord, I bring thee a bell;
I praie thee save me from hell,
So that I may with thee dwell,
  And serve thee for aye.

[*With similar prayers the second shepherd presents a flagon and spoon; the third, a cup, saying—*

"This gueifte, sonne, I bringe thee is bot smal;
And though it comes the hindmost of alle,
When Thou shall them to thy blessed calle
Gode Lorde, yet think on me."

These representations, and the Carols connected with them, being conducted, however, under the auspices of the priests, and education itself under the supervision of the monasteries—the only seats of learning—monkish Latin was necessarily tolerably familiar in the popular mouth. In some of the early specimens of the Christmas Carol are therefore to be found whole lines of Latin alternating with the vulgar tongue, of which the following instance may be cited from a MS carol in the British Museum:—

Now make us ioye in this feste,
In quo Christus natus est,
A patre unigenitus.
iij yong maydens cam till us,
Sing we hym, and say well-com,
Veni Redemptor Gentium.

From this curious Maccaronic structure, in which the English resembles the ballad, whilst the Latin retains

all the solemnity of the old monkish hymn, we may readily trace the direct descent of the popular or profane from the sacred or ecclesiastical Carol. In the Antique Carol, for example—

CHRISTO PAREMUS CANTICAM,

*Excelsis Gloria,—**

we have a Carol essentially English in its dress, though Latin in its native structure. As a specimen of our carol lore it is worthy of notice as the most

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* *Excelsis Gloria.* In the Messiah of Handel, the introduction of that instrumental movement, the Pastoral Symphony, is regarded as a great stroke of art, for it forms a most graceful repose after the powerful excitement of the previous chorus, and a most appropriate preparation for the scene of the watching shepherds that succeeds it. It forms, also, a necessary break in the conduct of the subject, to divide the prophecies from the advent of the Messiah. There is a further purport in the present movement which has been lately, by means of the researches of Dr. Rimbault, explained. The custom of the Pifferari, or pipers, from among the Calabrian peasantry, to celebrate the period of Christmas by a mendicant pilgrimage to Rome, where, before the principal shrines, some sing, while others accompany them upon their pipes, a hymn in honour of the Nativity, is well known, and has been made familiar by Wilkie's picture. This custom has prevailed from the earliest Christian ages, and the melody which

ancient vernacular Christmas Carol we now possess in print—that is to say, its antiquity goes as far back as printing itself reaches in this country. The words

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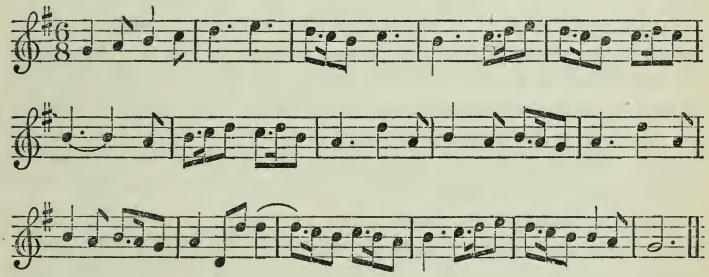
they sing is supposed to be of still remoter antiquity; it is to be found in a manuscript collection of hyms, transcribed in 1630, and is as follows:—

Upon this melody is constructed the Pastoral Symphony, and its appropriation to this purpose is shown to have been designed by Handel's having written "*Pifa,*" at the head of his manuscript. Nothing could be more pertinent to the situation than this primitive hymn on the Nativity. The words of the recitative are those already quoted from Luke ii. 8. But it appears that the words from "And lo!" to "sore afraid" were originally set as an air, which is one of the most unmeaning and ineffective compositions of Handel extant. The composer saw his error in attempting to set narrative words to rythmical melody, and replaced the air by an accompanied recitative, which is a singularly happy specimen of imitative music. The chorus to which this recitative leads, the hymn of the heavenly host, often

were found along with those of the no less famous and very similarly-constructed Christmas Carol of "Ye bryngynge in of ye Boar's Heade," and also of "A Carolle of Huntynge" (not a Christmas Carol), by

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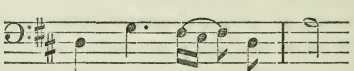
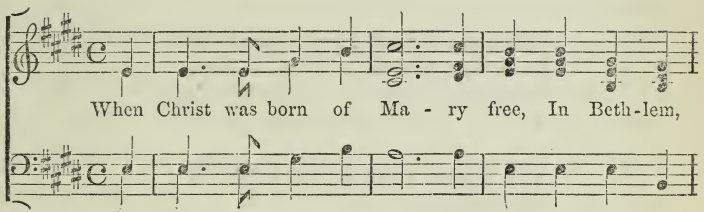
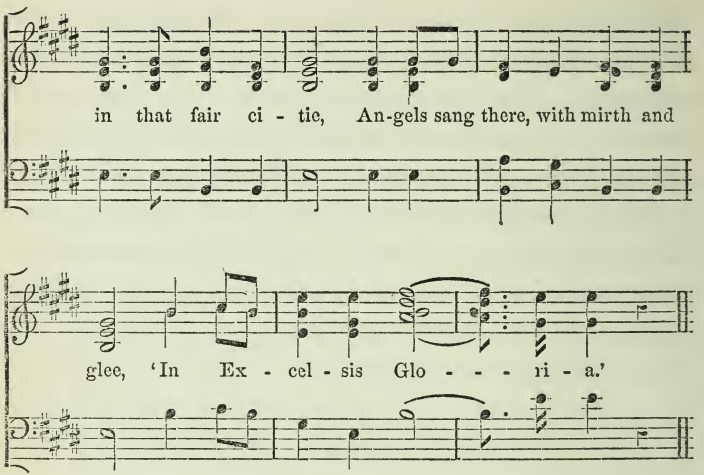
as the passage has been subjected to musical expression in the innumerable settings of the "Gloria in excelsis Deo" of the Roman Mass and the English Communion service, has not been surpassed in musical propriety. In comparing the various treatment of this passage, consideration must be given to its difference of purport in the Messiah, and as a part of Divine service; in the latter case, the words standing as the exclamation of the multitude assembled in worship; in the former, the musician treating them as sounding from the voices of the heavenly host with the angel. We may pass over the descriptive technicality of assigning the opening words to the high voices, and those which follow, "And peace on earth," to the basses; for the dignity of the music is such as to supersede the description; and it is most probable that many, and very intelligent hearers, witness performances of this chorus, and are duly impressed with its solemnity, but never think of the peculiar and somewhat whimsical illustration that it seems the composer must have intended to give of the actual words, in addition to the grand rendering he has made of their meaning. Let us call attention to the very closely worked point, and

especially to the fine sequence that grows out of it near the end of the chorus, which is interrupted by the bass entering at the interval of a third above the former repetition of the original progression,

Dame Juliana Berners, Prioress of St. Albans (a celebrated sporting authoress, well known for her work on falconry). They had been imprinted on the last leaf of a book, probably of Carols all now extinct, imprinted by no less a personage than Wynkyn de Worde, apprentice of William Caxton, the first English printer. The stray leaf, accidentally picked up, contained the *imprimatur*, and is now preserved in the Bodleian Library. The words and music of this quaint and beautiful carol are these:—

CHRISTO PAREMUS CANTICAM,



instead of, as is the case with each of the previous repetitions, at a second above. There is great dramatic propriety, we may almost say effect, in the dying away of the concluding symphony of this chorus, by which, evidently, Handel meant to suggest the retirement of the host of angels.—*G. A. Macfarren.*

Herdsmen beheld those angels bright,
To them appearing with great light,
Who said, God's Son is born this night,
In Excelsis Gloria.

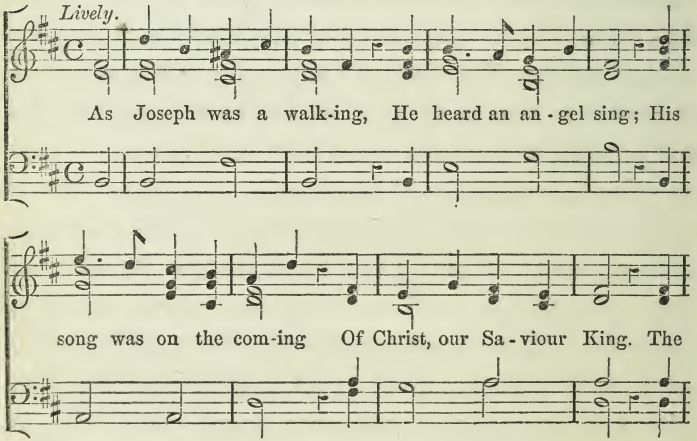
This King is come to save mankind,
As in Scripture truths we find,
Therefore this song have we in mind,
In Excelsis Gloria.

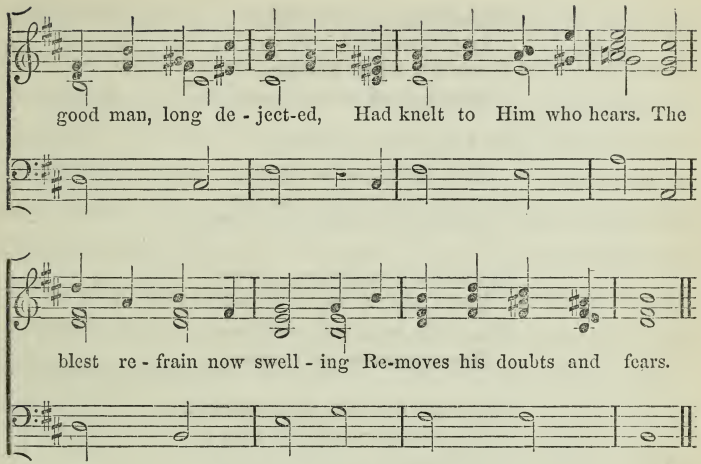
Then, Lord, for thy great grace,
Grant us the bliss to see thy face,
Where we may sing to thy solace,
In Excelsis Gloria.

For its ancient and appropriate refrain, this carol receives a foremost place amongst our antique specimens. The refrain is a phrase taken from the intonation of the Angel's Song, "*Gloria in Excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus,*" in the Latin ritual. But the English words are like those of all the popular, however sacred, songs of that period—simple, sometimes, to the verge of stupidity, familiar, frequently, to offensiveness. Who can listen, however, to so quaint and curious a strain, wedded to its crude jubilant traditional music, without detecting in it all the natural overflowings of the rejoicing heart? It is for this cause that we ascribe to it, above most existing Carols, the genuine attributes of a class of songs now all but perished; and seem to find in it, as in all the most beautiful tales and popular ballads obscurely born amongst the people, an infantile simplicity of imagination growing richer as it ignores the common world, and purer as it soars into the expression of the grand revolution in human destiny. Poetic, as well as religious virtues are embalmed in these crude memories of the olden time, when faith maintained its creed without investigation; and, believing deeply, was ever deeply moved by its

appeals to the heart and conscience. The most poetic times have most greedily adopted the most incoherent fictions, giving credit to tales like "Jack the Giant Killer" and "Blue Beard;" as we perhaps would, many of us, do now, provided the narrators would date them from the fourteenth century. Thus it was that legends like those of "JOSEPH AND THE ANGEL" were rapidly superinduced upon the tale of the "divine tidings" of the Nativity. As an example of Carol poetry in all its unsuspecting simplicity, it certainly cannot be surpassed.

THE LEGEND OF JOSEPH AND THE ANGEL.





"Be not afraid when hearing
The choirs seraphic sing;
This night shall be the birthtide
Of Christ the Heavenly King.

"He neither shall in housen
Be born, nor yet in hall;
Nor bed, nor downy pillow,
But in an oxen stall.

"He neither shall be clothed
In purple nor in pall,
But in the fair white linen
That usen babies all.

"He neither shall be rocked
In silver nor in gold;
But in a wooden manger,
That resteth on the mould."

As Joseph was a walking,
Thus did an angel sing;
At night the mother-maiden
Gave birth to Christ our King.

The blessed virgin wrapt him
From nightly winds so wild;
The lowly manger held Him,
Her wondrous, holy child.

And marshall'd on the mountain,
The angels raise their song;
The shepherds hear the story
In anthems clear and strong.

The herald-hymn obeying,
Nor loth, nor yet afraid,
They seek the lowly dwelling,
And find the blessed babe.

Then be ye glad, good people,
This night, of all the year;
And light ye up your candles,
His star it shineth near.

And all in earth and heaven
Our Christmas Carol sing:—
GOODWILL, AND PEACE, AND GLORY.
And all the bells shall ring.

The "ringing of bells" is an addition to the message of "Goodwill, and peace, and glory," which clearly betrays its having passed through the ecclesiastical alembic. It will be seen that the foregoing Carol beautifully embodies an unsophisticated narrative of the events of the Nativity. "He neither shall be clothed in purple, nor in pall," &c., may be taken as the *ne plus ultra* of the Carol stave. Two remarkably curious points may be here noticed; the star and the lighting of candles, referred to in the carol. The recent appearance of a comet of such splendour as Donati's may have revived the idea of Christ's Star having been, in fact, a great comet. The learned Dr. Olshausen in his "Proofs of the Genuiness of the New Testament Scriptures" inclines to this opinion, in preference to some others, which have been hazarded in favor of a particular conjunction of *four* planets, which occurred about the period of the birth of Christ:—

"That great events on earth had their corresponding appearances in the heavens, and shewed themselves principally in stars, was a very general opinion of antiquity (see Justin. Hist. xxxviii. 2 Suet., Vit. Cæs. c. 88), and is not without truth, though, it commonly served the purposes of superstition.* In the life of the Saviour, the surmise

* In the tract Yalkut Rubeni, it is said, '*Qua hora est Abrahamus,*

expressed in this opinion attained to reality and truth. In what this star of the King (ἀστὴρ βασιλέως) consisted is hardly to be ascertained, with certainty. The idea that an appearance in the air is meant is the most improbable; it could not find any support but in verse ninth, where it is said, 'The star stood over where the young child was!' Chalcidius, the Platonist (Opp. Hippoliti edid. J. A. Fabricius, p. 325,) understood a comet to be meant by the star. The learned Bishop Munter, of Copenhagen, takes it to be a constellation, and refers to the conjunction of planets which took place in the year 1825. See the Dissertations of the Academy of Sciences at Copenhagen for the year 1830. It is most probable to me that a particular star is intended,*

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stetit sidus quoddam in oriente, et deglutivit quatuor astra, quæ erant in quatuor Cœli plagis, Berthold. Christol. Ind., p. 55. The words evidently describe a conjunction of planets according to the sensible impression. Four stars united and formed a whole, so that one star seemed to have swallowed the four little ones.

* "Ideler who follows the Abbot Sanclemente, so celebrated as a chronologer, has made it uncertain whether the star ought not still to be regarded as a conjunction of planets. The above-mentioned scholars employ their view to fix the chronology of the year of Christ's birth, and show that six years before the Christian Era, a most remarkable conjunction of all the principal planets in our system did take place. Now, as the planets, according to the latest and most exact calculations were sometimes close together, at others farther off from each other, so that sometimes the star seemed to be there, at others to disappear, all which agrees well with Matthew's narrative. I am inclined to think this hypothesis very probable. In addition to this, according to Jewish tradition, *e.g.* of Abarbanel (in his Commentary on Daniel) such conjunctions are said to have happened at the birth of Moses also, and of other men of note in the Kingdom of God. See 'Ideler's Hand-

because of the parallel between the passage and Matt. xxiv. 30, where in like manner a sign of the Son of Man in heaven is foretold with reference to Christ's second coming, just as Numb. xxiv. 17, stood as a prophecy of the first coming of our Lord. In order to apply this passage to himself, the well-known false Messiah, Barkokhba, *Son of the Star*, took that name." Olshausen on Matt. ii. 2.

The other point we had noted for comment in this carol is that regarding the candles. The office of Chandeler became one of some importance in the monasteries, and from thence in the households of the great secular barons also. In regard to the latter, see a curious poem appended to the Boke of Curtasye, (*temp* Henry VI, Sloane MS, 1986 f., 46 b.

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buch der Chronologie,' part ii. p. 410 ff. And in the 'Lehrbuch' (Lessons) p. 428, where there is a fresh calculation by Encke. Kepler held the same opinion; only, from his calculation not being quite correct, he fixed the date of conjunction somewhat too late. Ignatius (Epist. ad Ephes. c. 19,) describes the star as a remarkable one, surpassing all others in the splendour of its light." [Might it not be an interesting calculation for astronomers to try back the elements of the late and some other comets of hitherto undetermined periods, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the "Great Light" which the shepherds saw in the east, might not nearly correspond with some one amongst them? We have been enabled by this means to correct the date of the Battle of Pharsalia, why not attempt to settle that of the Christian Era?]

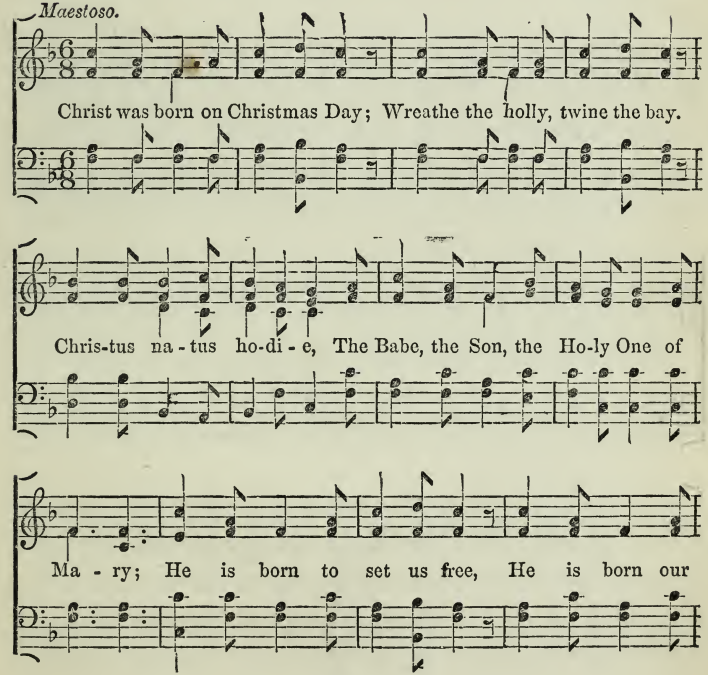
"Now speke I wylle a lytulle whyle,
Of the Chandeler wyth-outen gyle:
That torches and tortes prekates can make,
Perchours, small condel, I undertake."

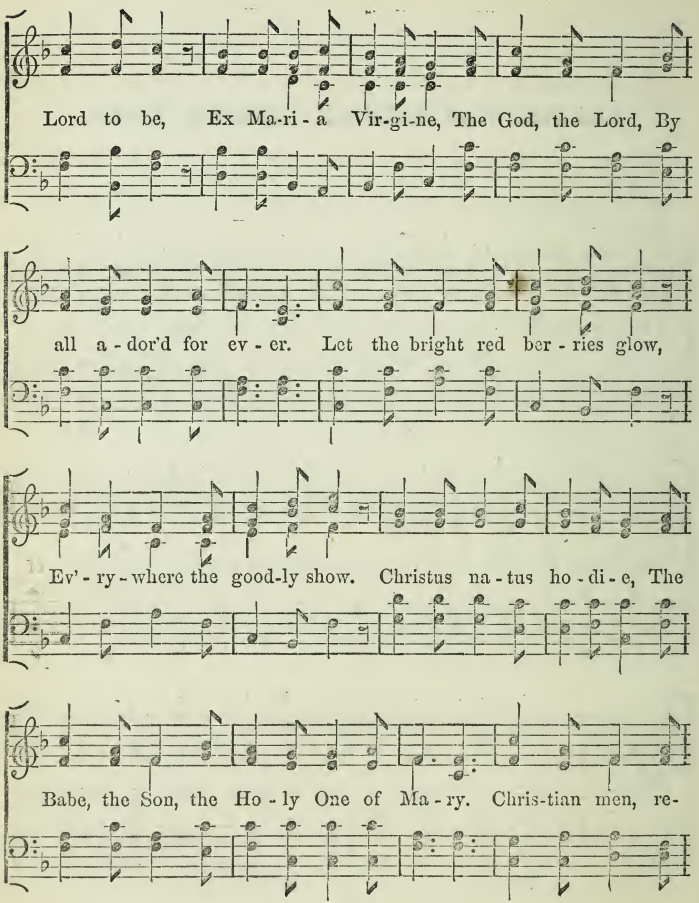
Chandeler signified, however, not only the maker of candles, but the candlestick from the French *chandelier*, and the Legenda Aurea speaks of a "chaundelier or candylstycke," f. vii. b. Doubtless the introduction of Christmas Candles refers to the moment mentioned in the Carol when the darkness of the stable at Bethlehem is supposed, as in a great Dutch painting of the Nativity at the Hague, to have been dispelled by means of artificial light of this kind, that the adoring Shepherds might behold their Lord.

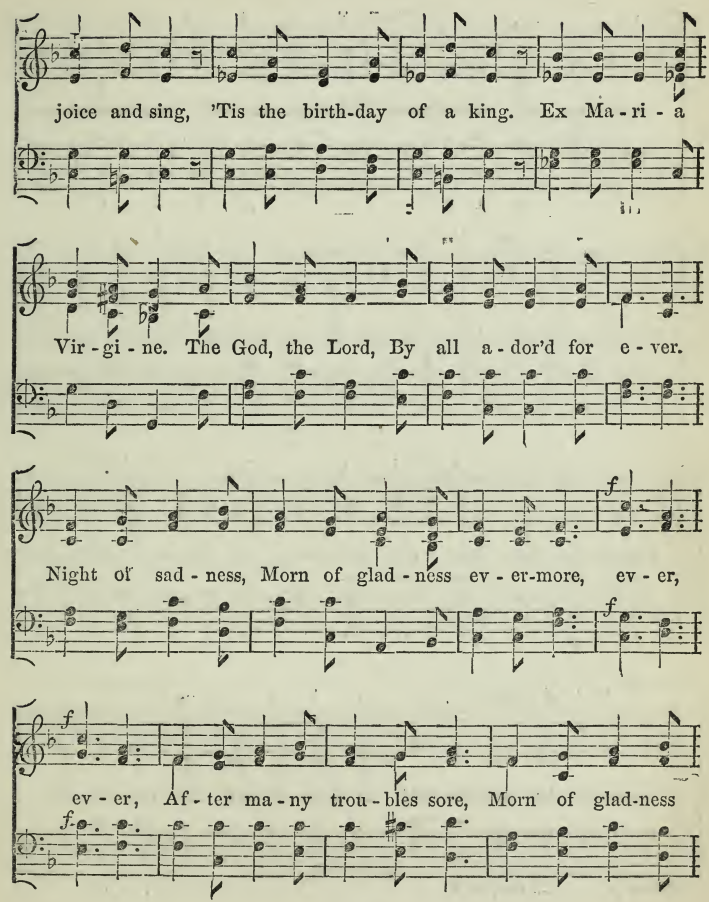
"CHRIST WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS DAY."

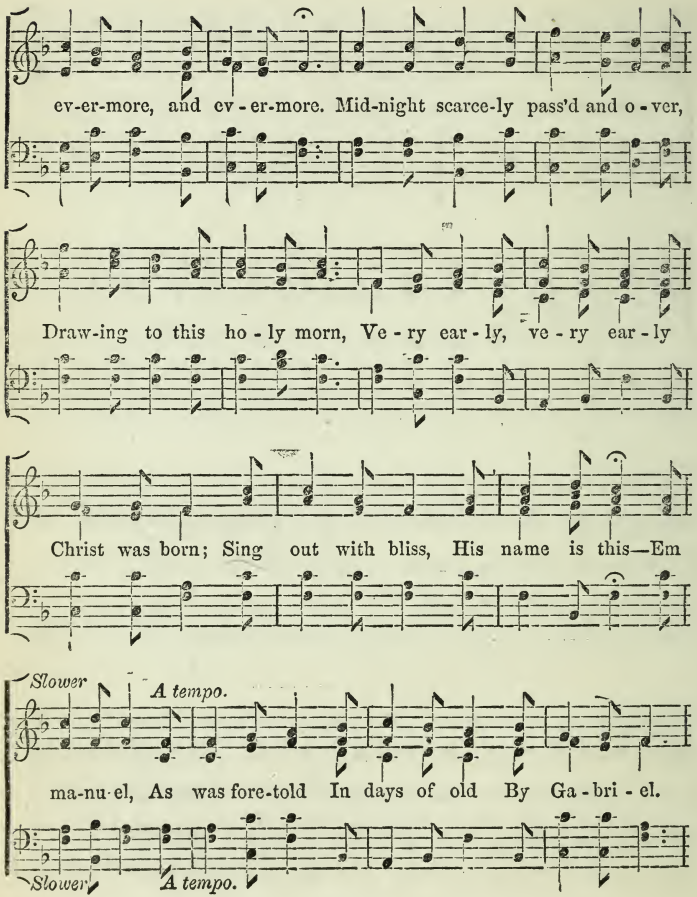
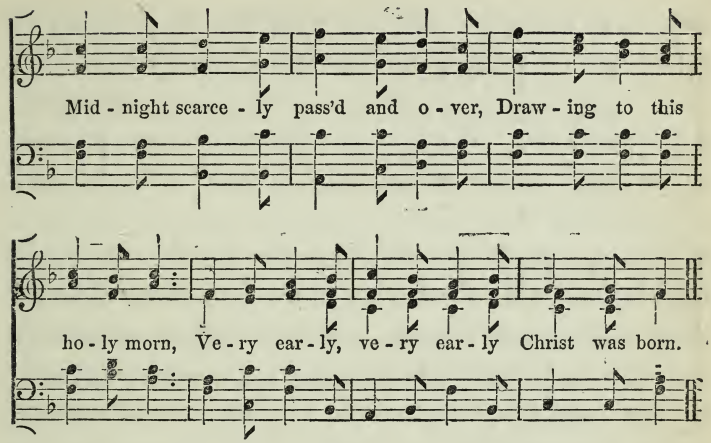
Not only in England, but also in Sweden did the words of the Christmas Carol acquire a macaronic form —a patchwork of various languages—as we find in the Rev. J. M. Neale's beautiful adaptation of words from the Swedish original to the Rev. T. Helmore's music.

"CHRIST WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS DAY.


Maestoso.
Christ was born on Christmas Day; Wreathe the holly, twine the bay.
Chris-tus na-tus ho-di-e, The Babe, the Son, the Ho-ly One of
Ma-ry; He is born to set us free, He is born our


Lord to be, Ex Ma-ri-a Vir-gi-ne, The God, the Lord, By
all a-dor'd for ev-er. Let the bright red ber-ries glow,
Ev'-ry-where the good-ly show. Christus na-tus ho-di-e, The
Babe, the Son, the Ho-ly One of Ma-ry. Chris-tian men, re-


joice and sing, 'Tis the birth-day of a king. Ex Ma-ri-a
Vir-gi-ne. The God, the Lord, By all a-dor'd for e-ver.
Night of sad-ness, Morn of glad-ness ev-er-more, ev-er,
ev-er, Af-ter ma-ny trou-bles sore, Morn of glad-ness


ev-er-more, and ev-er-more. Mid-night scarce-ly pass'd and o-ver,
Draw-ing to this ho-ly morn, Ve-ry ear-ly, ve-ry ear-ly
Christ was born; Sing out with bliss, His name is this—Em
Slower
A tempo.
ma-nu-el, As was fore-told In days of old By Ga-bri-el.
Slower
A tempo.

This in its English dress will be found to constitute one of our most jubilant, as well as spirited and beautiful Christmas Carols. There is an enthusiastic outburst of vigorous joy, tempered by christian love and veneration in enunciating the names of the Most High—God manifest in the flesh. It possesses the true choral resonance of a Scandinavian ballad, and the balance of tone peculiar to the ritualistic hymn. One observation we might adventure respecting the way in which a merry Carol such as this may have influenced the progress of popular music. During the period when plain

chant was in vogue, time was irregular, or, if observed at all, was so in simple accordance with general and often vague tradition, or with individual and necessarily capricious taste. Now, in this Swedish Carol, as well as in many lively ecclesiastical chants, there is, notwithstanding this, found occurring a natural sensation of duple or triple time well worthy of note. In referring to this Carol, we may be permitted to mention that, along with about a dozen others admirably selected for popular performance, it has been published by Mr. Alfred Novello at the low price of a shilling, which may well fill the hands of the lovers and admirers of Carol music, with ample means of making the Christmas morning air resound. Nothing could please us better than to see Mr. Novello's excellent little selection in all hands.

"GOD REST YE, MERRY GENTLEMEN."

This famous Carol is strictly religious, notwithstanding the somewhat festive opening line. Misled by this, the Christian Knowledge Society, in a book of Christmas Carols which they have published with the

music, but accompanied as the excellent and reverend editor informs us by new words substituted for those under form of which he alleges this custom to have been kept up as a mere incitement to feasting and carousing, have given their fine Carol of "The Virgin and Child." As, however, there are two modes of singing "God rest ye, Merry Gentlemen," a Carol acknowledged by all lovers of Christmas to be like part of the ceremonies of the day, and as it is both sung in the minor and in the major key, though generally in the minor, we shall be saved the necessity of repetition by giving it in the minor, accordingly, reserving the major mode for the Virgin and Child, which is really a pretty and appropriate Carol. That the incitement, however, in the old original words of the "Merry Gentlemen" (corrupted, we are sorry to see, to "Christians," in a version of date this present Christmas) tends much higher than to—

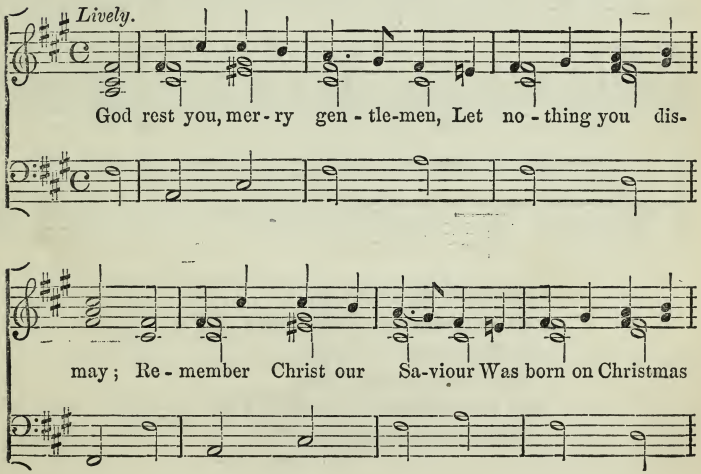
> "Christmas good cheer,
> Minced pies and plum porridge,
> Good ale and strong beer,"

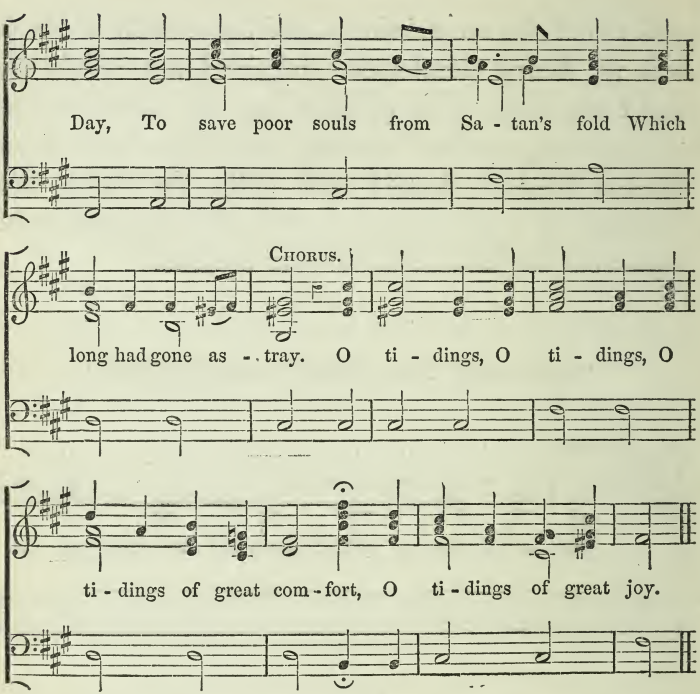
there need be no difficulty of determining. The circumstances related are quite in keeping indeed with

the old literary anecdote of a certain "Compendious Boke of Godely and Spirituall Sangs," imprinted at Edinburgh in 1621, where the "true blue" Covenanting printer (Wedderburn) had actually rendered decent words ridiculous by setting them to all the most ribald music that was ranted round the country, had in fact outraged piety by its association with tunes the most impure. Save and except its most quaint and appropriate Christmas salutation, "God rest ye, Merry Gentlemen," is in substance a narrative exclusively devoted to the events of the Nativity. William Hone amply attests the existing popularity of the air in his "Every Day Book," wherein he complains that Carols begin to be spoken of as things not belonging to the nineteenth century. He states that in 1825 he possessed a collection of ninety Carols, all of which were at that date the subjects of annual publication. He reproachfully observes that in the rage for "collecting everything," however, Carols as a class of popular poetry have been completely overlooked. "To me," he adds, "they have been objects of interest from circumstances which usually determine the direction of pursuit. The wood-

cuts round the annual sheets, and the melody of 'God rest ye, Merry Gentlemen,' delighted my childhood, and I still listen with pleasure (as who does not) to the shivering carolists' evening chant towards the clean kitchen window decked with holly, the flaring fire showing the whitened hearth and reflecting gleams of light from the faces of the dresser utensils."

"GOD REST YOU, MERRY GENTLEMEN."




Day, To save poor souls from Sa - tan's fold Which
Chorus.
long had gone as - tray. O ti - dings, O ti - dings, O
ti - dings of great com - fort, O ti - dings of great joy.

In Bethlehem, in Jewry,
This blessed babe was born;
And laid within a manger,
Upon this happy morn.
And this disguise the mother wise
Did nothing take in scorn.
O tidings, &c.

From God, who is our Father,
A shining angel came;
And unto certain shepherds
Brought tidings of the same.
How that in Bethlehem was born
The Son of God by name.
O tidings, &c.

"Go, fear not," said God's angel,
"Let nothing you affright;
For there is born in Bethlehem,
Of a virgin pure and bright,
One able to advance you true,
And beat down Satan quite."
O tidings, &c.

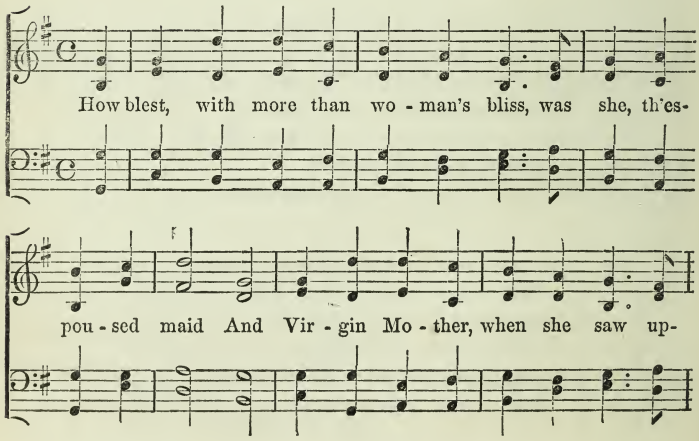
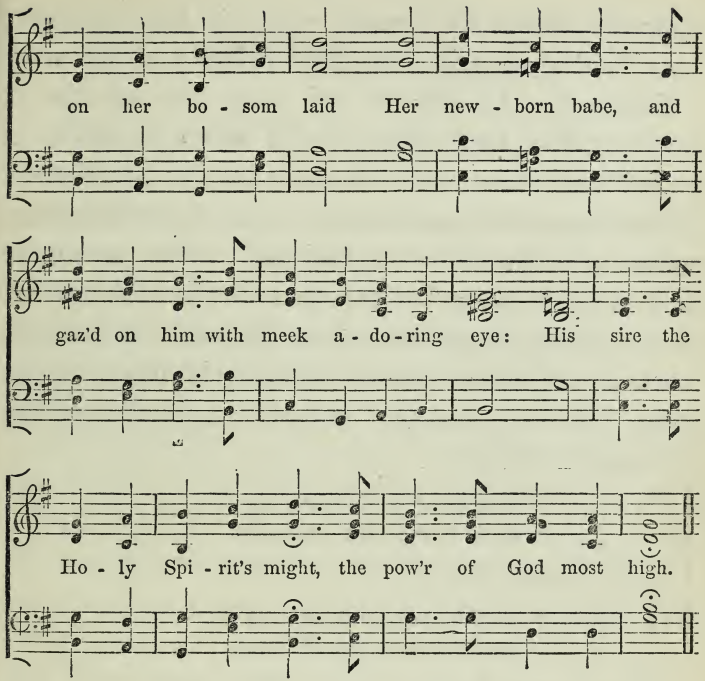
The shepherds at those tidings
Rejoiced much in mind,
And left their flocks a feeding
In tempest, storm, and wind.
And straight they went to Bethlehem,
The Son of God to find.
O tidings, &c.

Now when they came to Bethlehem,
Where our sweet Saviour lay;
They found him in a manger,
Where oxen fed on hay;
The maiden-mother kneeling down
Before the Lord to pray.
O tidings, &c.

With holy joy and gladness
Then were those shepherds filled,
To see the babe of Israel,
To see the mother mild.
With joy sang they upon this day,
The Scriptures are fulfilled.
O tidings, &c.

The unsophisticated simplicity of this ballad-like narrative might surely have spared it from the censure to which we have referred; we now annex its rival in the major key, but here also we think it will be owned that the music goes better in the minor.

THE VIRGIN AND CHILD.



on her bo - som laid Her new - born babe, and
gaz'd on him with meek a - do - ring eye: His sire the
Ho - ly Spi - rit's might, the pow'r of God most high.

THE NOËLS.

This French word for Christmas is also taken to signify a Christmas Carol. This name is inseparably united to Christmas, and is, in fact, that whereby it is

specially known in France, where it has sometimes been held to represent the final syllable of the word "Emanuel." In English and Anglo-Norman Carols, however (into some illustration of which, as well as of their French congeners, this point directs us), NOWELL has been broadly presented to us in its simpler acceptation of "News" or "Tidings." This would be little or no violation of the pronunciation "Nouvellas" in the *Vielle Française*, or old French. It has also the merit of direct correspondency with the occasion sung. One old carolist, indeed, employs it as the salutation to Mary.

> Now el, el, el—el, el, el, el;
> Mary was gret by Gabrielle.

Thus modernised :—

> Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell;
> To Mary thus spake Gabriel.

The famous Oxford Boar's Head Carol, not only commences—

> Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell;
> Tydinge good I thynke to tell,

but has the "Nowell" refrain. One of our old English Maccaronic Carols also opens :—

Nowell, nowell, in this hall
Make mery, I pray yowe all.
On that chyldë may we call.
Ullo sine crimine.

Occasionally the effect of the word noel is however lost in translation in the broader and more extensive signification of Christmas itself, as will be seen, when, under our festive Carols, we come to present, we regret to say without any music, Dr. Douce's celebrated translation from the Anglo-Norman "Now, lordlings, listen to our ditty." But we may here offer, instead, a genuine French Noel, formerly sung in France with great popularity to a merry tune. It is even less translatable than the Anglo-Norman, from that peculiarity which is the pest of words unsuited to choral music, and of frequent occurrence in our most favourite church tunes—the nonsensical frittering of them down into syllables to accommodate the notation.

OLD FRENCH NOEL.

Quand Dieu naquit a Noe
Dedans la Judee;
On vit le jour solemne
La joie innondie;

Il n'etoit ni petit ni grand
Qui n'apportoit son present.
Et n'o, n'o, n'o, n'o,
Et n'offrit, frit, frit
Et n'o, n'o—et n'offrit,
Et n'offrit sans cesse,
Toute sa richesse.

line for line :—

When Christ was born on Christmas,
Within Judea's realm,
That solemn day gave witness
What joy did overwhelm;
For neither small nor great was there
Who did not with him presents bear,
And off—, off—, off—, off—,
And off'red, —red;
And off—, off—, and off'red not,
And off'red not unceasingly his all.

These forms of the Noel "refrain," together with such uses and sports upon the word, may now have prepared the reader for

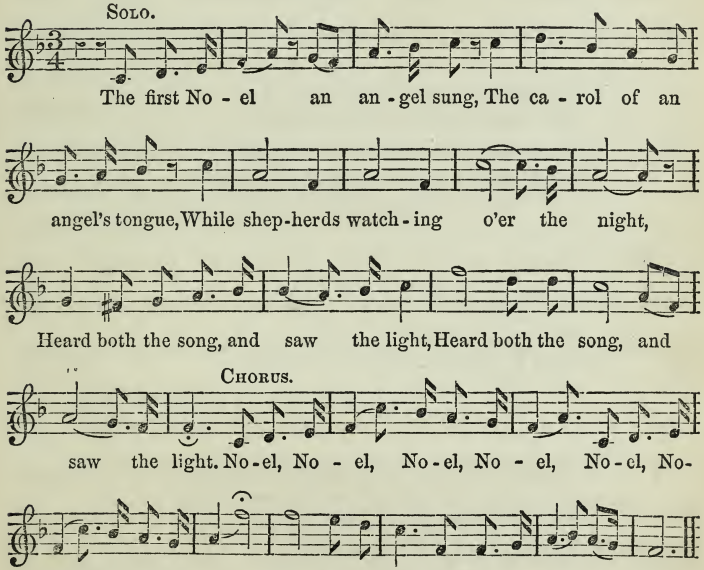
"THE FIRST NOEL."

This favourite and beautiful solo, with its powerful and effective chorus, is given as "an olden composure upon Christmas Day." Of its antiquity there can be

no question; and its narrative and versification will be found strangely in keeping with those of "Joseph and the Angel" as well as of "Merry Gentlemen."

"THE FIRST NOEL."

(AN OLDEN COMPOSURE.)


Solo.
The first No - el an an - gel sung, The ca - rol of an
angel's tongue, While shep-herds watch - ing o'er the night,
Heard both the song, and saw the light, Heard both the song, and
Chorus.
saw the light. No-el, No - el, No-el, No - el, No-el, No-
el, No-el, No - el, Born is the King, the King of Is - ra - el.

2. Now by a strange and sudden star,
Three wise men went their way afar;
And journey'd on with deep intent,
To seek a king, where'er it went.

Nowell, noël, noë-el; noël, noël, noël.

3. The star, their guide 'twixt north and west,
O'er Bethlem's walls at length took rest;
And here its light, in one calm stay,
Fell o'er the place where Jesus lay.

Noël, noël, nò-è-èl; noël, noël, noël.

4. The Eastern sages watch its rays,
And silent stand in solemn gaze.
One enters in; and, meek and mild,
He finds the new-born Heavenly child.

Noël, noël, nò-è-èl; noël, noël, noël.

5. In gentle bands the infant lay,
In manger, 'mid the corn and hay;
The Son of David's royal line
Was born within the stalls for kine.

Noël, noël, nò-è-è; noël, noël, noël.

6. Then entered in those wise men three,
And bowed their heads with bended knee;
They knelt before the Babe Divine,
Led to him by the faithful sign.

Noël, noël, nò-è-èl; noël, noël, noël.

7. Those wise men three, with offering meet,
Fall down and worship Jesus' feet;
With offerings rich, the gifts of old,
Rare myrrh, and frankincense, and gold.

Noël, noël, nò-è-èl; noël, noël, noël.

The Noels fairly bring us to the last class of popular religious Carols—those relating to the Magi, and the singular "Golden" and other legends connected with these three Eastern Sages. Apart from these traditions, Μάγοι is well known to be originally the name of the learned class amongst the Parsees. In Jerem. xxxix. 3, the Hebrew term used for the head of the college of Magi is incorrectly rendered *philosophers* in Greek by Suidas, as it might have been better rendered "great," "excellent" from the Persian root. In later times the name was used like those of "Mathematicus" and "Chaldaeus," to imply all who were attached to secret science, particularly astrologers. In the former sense it is employed in Acts xiii. 6. The narrative of the Nativity would seem to be most simply explained, however, by regarding the Magi as adherents of the Zoroastrian worship of light, which, even prior to the time of Christ, had extended widely through out the western parts of Asia. Amongst the Cilician

pirates, Pompey found the worship of Mithras a branch of the Zend religion (Plut. vit. Pomp., c. 37). The expression "from the East" applies, in its indefinite generality, to all situated east of Palestine, whether in Arabia, adjacent, or in Persia, farther off. Now, the hypothesis that these Magi were Parsees is considered by some commentators as particularly plausible, because of the remarkable germs of truth in the Zend Avesta itself, which actually embodies the idea of Sosiosh—an expected Saviour. The Persians, however, expected their Redeemer from the family of Zoroaster, whilst the Magi came confessedly to seek "the King of the Jews"—leading to the inference also that they were *not* Jews—not even of the dispersed ten tribes. The circumstance of their being guided by a star points to their pursuit of astronomy. The early Church, too, looked upon these Magi as representatives of the heathen world come to do homage to our Saviour. Their being taken for kings is traceable to Old Testament hints—Ps. lxviii., 29, 31; lxxii., 10; Is. xlix., 7; lx., 3, 6.

The Carols relating to the Magi, it must be noticed, belong to the Epiphany, or Twelfth Day, in common

with Christmas Day. Twelfth Day is so called because it falls on the twelfth day after Christmas—the word Epiphany signifying "manifestation" from its being the day on which Christ was manifested to the Gentiles. The twelve days intervening are denominated "the twelve days of Christmas;" but honest Tusser, in his "Five Hundred Points of Husbandry," strives to bring about their limitation to six, enjoining:—

> "When Christmas is ended,
> Bid feasting adieu;
> Go play the good husband,
> Thy stock to renew."

Though Twelfth Day customs are very varied, especially in Eastern countries, they all concur in being observed in honour of the Magi.

The next Carol, entituled "The Golden Carol of Melchior, Balthazar, and Gaspar, the three Kings of Cologne," is adapted to an ancient melody. For this and many others of our really antique Christmas ditties, the public are greatly indebted to the musical education, taste, and attainments of Dr. Gauntlett, who has adapted the words to ancient melodies. Legendary lore has, however, provided for us these three notable

personages, commonly known as the Magi, who were guided by the star to the cradle of the Nativity, and survive in history as the Three Kings of Cologne. These were the wise men who travelled to Bethlehem beneath its rays, laden with their mystical yet costly gifts of gold, myrrh, and frankincense, which originated the common practice of bestowing Christmas gifts in token of Christian fellowship and family love. The "golden" appellation of this Carol was acquired either from the golden character of the gifts or the appropriate splendour of the ancient illuminations representing this incident of Christian story in the ecclesiastical MSS. Everything, indeed, is golden about Jaspar or Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. Some scriptural passages, as already mentioned, have been considered expressly to refer to these personages or princes:—"The Gentiles shall come to thy light, as kings to the brightness of thy rising"—"The Kings of Tharsis and the Isles, the Kings of Arabia and Saba, shall offer gifts." Sir Thomas Browne, in his curious "Pseudodoxia Epidemica," or "Vulgar Errors," was the first amongst us to resolve the mystery of these Three Kings of Cologne. These wise men, or kings, he tells us, were

probably of Arabia, and descended of Abraham by Keturah. Apprehending, therefore, the mystery of the star, they suffered themselves to be conducted by it into Judea. He adds that they returned into their own country, where they were afterwards baptised by Thomas the Apostle. Thence, about three hundred years afterwards, their embalmed bodies were translated by the Empress Helena to Constantinople. By Eustatius they were removed from Constantinople to Milan. At last they were taken, about A.D. 1170, by Renatus, the Bishop, to Cologne, where they are actually believed at present to remain entombed. Their monuments are shown, at all events, to strangers, "and, having lost their Arabian titles, says Sir Thomas Browne, "they are crowned kings of Cologne." Bradshaw, in fact, comes in with railway speed to relate the sequel of their story; and there are few Continental tourists but have visited the tomb. "The chest in which they reposed," it would seem from the guide-book, "is (or ought to be) composed of plate-gold and silver, exquisitely engraved, with an encircling of small arcades supported by pillars." The rich treasures and decorations were, alas! carried off during the excitement of

the first French revolution, when several of the jewels that encrusted the precious monument were sold, and replaced by paste or glass counterfeits. The coffin is stated to have two partitions, the lower having a half and the upper a whole roofing. The former compartment contains the bones of the three kings, whose separate heads appear aloft through the aperture in the half-roofing; and on this roofing are inscribed the names "Gaspar, Melchior, Balthazar," encrusted in rubies. The skulls are adorned with crowns weighing six pounds apiece—crowns composed of gold, diamonds, and pearls! It is asserted (but doubted) that the tomb and its contents are of the value of £240,000. Another Carol, "Our Saviour Chryste and His Ladye," set precisely to the same measure, sings of the voyage of the Magi:—

I saw three ships come sailing in,
On Christmas in the morning;
Three goodly ships come sailing in,
On Christmas in the morning.

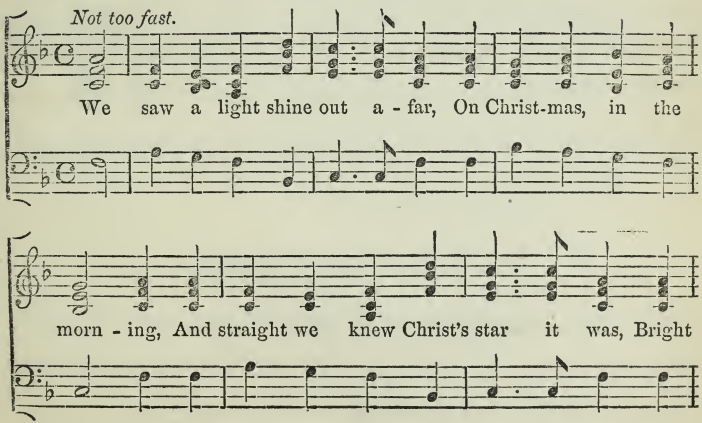
And what was in those ships all three?
On Christmas in the morning;
Our Saviour Christ, and his Ladye,
On Christmas in the morning.

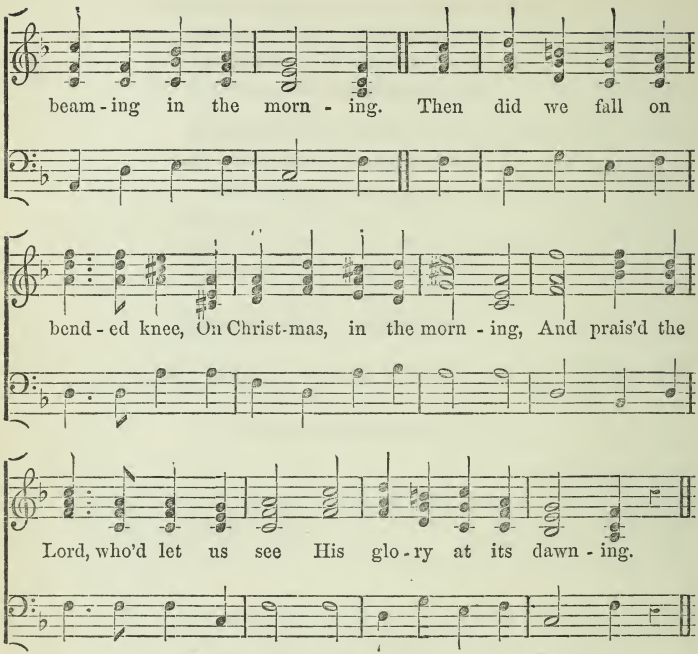
But whither sailed those ships all three?
On Christmas in the morning;
They sailed straight into Bethlehem,
On Christmas in the morning.

Now all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas in the morning;
For in the heavens all angels sing,
On Christmas in the morning.
And all the souls on earth shall sing,
On Christmas in the morning.
And all of us rejoice amain,
On Christmas in the morning.

We must say, we greatly prefer to this air—

THE GOLDEN CAROL.




beam - ing in the morn - ing. Then did we fall on
bend - ed knee, On Christ-mas, in the morn - ing, And prais'd the
Lord, who'd let us see His glo - ry at its dawn - ing.

III.—THE FESTIVE CAROLS.

We recur now to Dr. Douce's translation, formerly referred to, of an ancient Norman Carol, as showing off carol singing in its purely festive aspect.

NORMAN CAROL.

Seignors ore entendez a nus,
De loinz sumes venuz a vous,
Pur quere Noel;
Car leur nus dit que cet hostel,
Soleit tenir sa fest anuel.
Alu c'est iur.
Deu doint a tuz icels joie d'amurs,
Qui a danz Noel ferunt honors.

Seignors io vus di por veir,
De dans Noel ne uelt aveir,
Si joie non;
E repleni sa maison,
De payn, de char, et de peison,
Por faire honor.
Deu doint a tuz ces joie d'amur, &c.

Seignors il est crie en l'ost,
Qe cil que des peut bien et tost,
Elargement;
E fet les grand honors sovent,
Du le duble quanque el despent,
Por faire honor.
Deu doint a tuz, &c.

Seignors escriez les malvies,
Car vus nel les trouveres jamais,
De bon part;
Botun, batun, ferun groinard,
Car tot dis a le quer Cuuard,
Por faire honor.
Deu doint, &c.

Noel beyt bien li vin Engleis,
E li Gascoin et li Franceys,
E l'Angeuin;
Noel fait bewre son veisin,
Si quil se dort le chief enclin,
Sovent le cor.
Deu doint, &c.

Seignors io vus di par Noel,
E par li sires de cest hostel,
Car benez ben;
E io primes beuvait le men,
Epois apres chesun le soen,
Par mon conseil,
So io vus de trestiz wesseyl,
De haiz est qui ne dirra drincheye.

DR. DOUCE'S TRANSLATION.

Now, lordlings, listen to our ditty,
Strangers coming from afar;
Let poor minstrels move your pity,
Give us welcome, sooth our care.
In this mansion, as they tell us,
CHRISTMAS wassail keeps to-day,
And, as king of all good fellows,
Reigns with uncontrolled sway.
Hail, Father Christmas! hail to thee!
Honored ever shalt thou be!
Endless pleasures wait on those,
And all the sweets that love bestows,
Who, like vassals brave and true,
Give to Christmas honour due.

Lordlings, in these realms of pleasure
Father Christmas yearly dwells;
Deals out joy with lib'ral measure,
Gloomy sorrow soons dispels.
Num'rous guests, and viands dainty,
Fill the hall and grace the board;
Mirth and beauty, peace and plenty,
Solid pleasures here afford.
Hail, Father Christmas! hail to thee! &c.

Lordlings, 'tis said the lib'ral mind,
That on the needy much bestows,
From Heav'n a sure reward shall find,
From Heav'n, whence ev'ry blessing flows.
Who largely gives with willing hand,
Or quickly gives with willing heart,
His fame shall spread throughout the land,
His memory thence shall ne'er depart.
Hail, Father Christmas! hail to thee! &c.

Lordlings, grant not your protection
To a base, unworthy crew;
But cherish, with a kind affection,
Those that are loyal, good, and true.
Chase from your hospitable dwelling
Swinish souls that ever crave;
Virtue they can ne'er excel in,
Gluttons never can be brave.
Hail, Father Christmas! &c.

Lordlings, Christmas loves good drinking,
Wine of Gascoigne, France, Anjou;
English ale, that loves not thinking,
Prince of liquors, old or new.

Ev'ry neighbour shares the bowl,
Drinks of the spicy liquor deep
Drinks his fill without control,
Till he drowns his care in sleep.
Hail, Father Christmas! &c.

And now, by Christmas' jolly soul,
And by this mansion's gen'rous sire!
By the wine, and by the bowl,
And all the joys that both inspire,
Here I'll drink a health to all,
The glorious task shall first be mine;
And ever may foul luck befall
Him that to pledge me shall decline.
Hail, Father Christmas! &c.

"CAPUT APRI DEFERO."

In coming to the Boar's Head Carol, "Caput apri defero," literally "the head of the boar bear I in hand," it must be frankly owned that a slight difficulty appears to present itself in accounting for this peculiar Christmas custom. It should, however, be remembered that we are dealing with antiquity, and that, referring to that unfashionable era when our ancestors fed, who knows? on the rich, farinaceous, and oily fruits of the oak, beech, chestnut, and other trees of the forest, whilst their hogs did exactly the same, George

Canning sarcastically accounted for the origin of savage cruelty by representing man as gazing one day on the sleek rotundity of the hitherto unenvied swine, till, irresistibly seized with the desire of converting the unsuspecting animal into a dish,—

> "He twangs his bow—the hissing arrow flies;
> And darkness seals the gentle porker's eyes."

Even so it is remarked by Mr. Charles Knight, in that incomparably curious popular work of his, "Old England,"—where he is speaking of the chief reliance of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors for the matter of flesh meat, especially throughout the winter season—their reliance upon swine, which, though private property, fed by thousands in the vast woods with which the country abounded—that our word *bacon* is (quoting the Venerable Bede) "of the Beechen tree anciently called Bucon, and whereas swine's flesh is now called by the name of 'Bacon,' it grew only at the first unto such as were fatted with Bucon or Beech mast." This definition escaped Dr. Johnson, who evidently had no notion of the very circumstantial origin of the term!

It is then easy enough to perceive what figure the

boar's head was likely to make in the ordering of a feast. The boar, indeed, appears to have been early singled out by ancient Nimrods as a foeman worthy even of royal steel; and the head of the noble savage, did then as much honor to the table of a king as the brush of a fox to the stable of a modern squire. Indeed, there was princely distinction to be gained by the slaughter of the boar, if the story of Meleager's rencontre with the Calydonian brute referred to in the Carol of "The Boar is Dead," or Homer's account of it in the Iliad (b. ix. 657-662), or Virgil's in the Æneid (vii. 423), or "Ovid's Story of Meleager and Atalanta" had any foundation, in fact. The classic fable says that Æneas, king of Calydon in Ætolia, having sacrificed to all the deities save Diana, in gratitude for an abundant harvest; the goddess avenged his neglect of her, not only by inciting all the neighbouring princes to declare war against him, but by sending a furious boar to ravage his dominions. The destruction of this animal soon became a subject of common interest; and chief amongst the princes who engaged in the chase was the king's son, Meleager. The princess Atalanta also joined in the enterprise; and, in fact, first wounded

the boar afterwards killed by Meleager; who, being enamoured of his fair coadjutor, presented her with the head. This irritated the other princes, and particularly his four uncles, to such a degree, that, in defending Atalanta from their ire, Meleager slew them likewise. Their sister and his mother Althea, having plucked and preserved a certain firebrand from the fire, owing to a prophecy of the Fates, that as long as it remained unconsumed, Meleager should live; shocked at encountering the dead bodies of her brothers on her way to offer up thanks for her son's victory, committed the fatal brand anew to the fire in a moment of despair and rage, and that moment Meleager the Boar-Slayer expired. It is not necessary here to recount the equally well-known story of Atalanta, her suitors, her race, and her three golden apples. Of a more recent hero, Richard Cœur-de-lion it is recorded that, once, in the Holy Land, faint and wearied with the slaughter of the Paynim, he called for refreshments on returning to his tent. The distracted steward was unprovided with the required supplies. But cooks are men of genius, and the inge-

nuity of the gallant Richard's faithful purveyor, though severely tried, was finally triumphant. He in a trice served up for the king the grimest head of all the ferocious Saracens his Highness had that day slain. But, just as the royal appetite was about to whet itself upon this dainty, the trumpets sounded to boot and saddle. Saladin had made another onslaught—was already, indeed, midway within the Crusader's camp. Once more, the lion-hearted leapt, therefore, into the saddle. Hunger forgotten, he yet sallied forth in no very pleasant mood. Down went the infidels, like nine-pins, at his resistless onset. The rout was sudden and complete. Returning once more to his tent not less hungry for the prey, his steward was quite as unprovided as ever; and chafing with impatient ire, the king is said to have demanded "the head of thilke same swine he had tasted of before!"

The places where the Christmas Boar's Head ceremony is specially observed, by bringing in the gigantic dish in procession, with song and chorus, on Christmas Day, are Queen's College, Oxford, St. John's College, Cambridge, and the Inner Temple, London. At the

former are still preserved several versions of "The Boar's Head Carol," *in die natitinal*, of which the quaintest is the following:—

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell,
Tydynge gode y thynke to tell.

The borys hede that we bring here,
Betokeneth a p'nce without en pere
Ys born this day to bye v'dere.
Nowell, nowell, &c.

A bore ys a souerayn beste,
And acceptable in eu'ye feste.
So mote this Lord be to most and leste.
Nowell, nowell, &c.

This borys hede we bring with song,
In worship of Him that thus sprang
Of a virgin, to redeem all wrong.
Nowell, nowell, &c.

The late Very Reverend Dean Wade, of Glasgow, in his "Walks in Oxford," has made too pleasant a memorandum respecting the origin of the Oxford boar's head ceremonies to bear omission. "Tradition," says he, "presents this usage as a commemoration of an act of valour performed by a student of the college, who, walking in the neighbouring forest of Shotover,

and reading 'Aristotle,' was suddenly attacked by a wild boar. The furious beast came, open-mouthed, upon the youth, who, however, very courageously, and with a happy presence of mind, is said to have rammed in the volume, and cried '*Graecum est*' (it is Greek); fairly," adds the Dean, "choking the savage with the sage."

Anciently, at the Inner Temple, early in the morning of Christmas Day, the gentlemen of the inn went to Church, and after the service, we are told, "they did presently repair unto the hall to breakfast with brawn,* mustard, and malmsey." At the first course at dinner was served a fair and large boar's head upon a silver platter, with minstrelsy. So we are told by Dugdale, *Orig. Jurid.*

Warton gives the Boar's Head Carol nearly as

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* *Brawn*, conjectured by Tooke to be *boaren* (flesh being understood), was anciently applied in a much more general sense. Piers Ploughman speaks of "brawn and blood of the goos, bacon and colhopes;" and Chaucer, in the Knight's tale, applies it to part of the human frame:—

"His limmes gret, his brawnes hard and strong."

We still call a muscular individual "brawny."

adapted below to the music, adding, "this Carol, yet with many innovations, is retained in Queen's College, Oxford, and still sung in that college, somewhat altered, to the common chant of the prose version of the Psalms. Henry II., upon the coronation of the young Prince, 1170, according to Hollinshed, "served his son at table as sewer, bringing up the boar's head, with trumpets before it, according to the manner." The "Boar is dead" was, in point of fact, the grace which was sung before another Prince Henry in 1607.

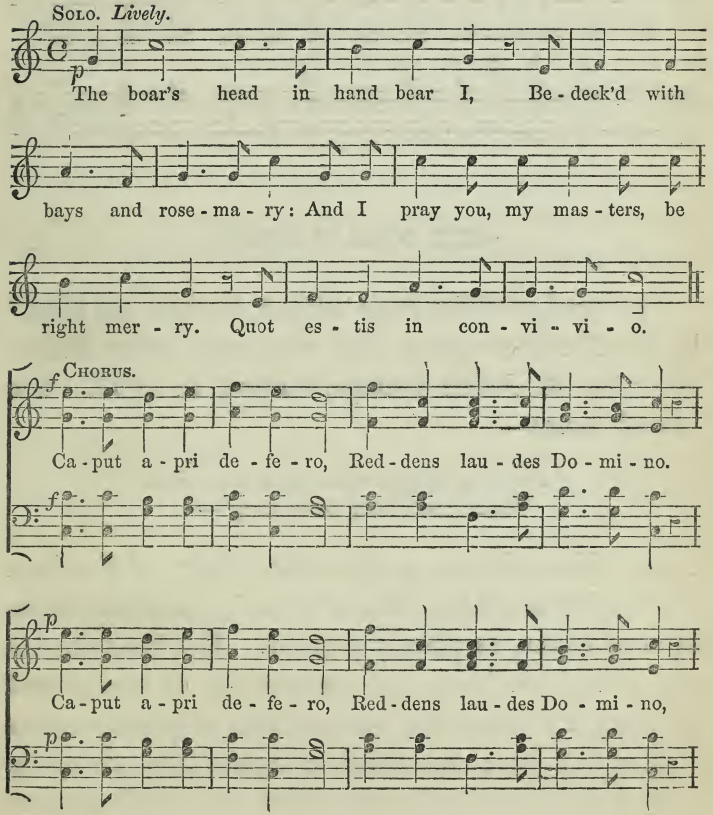
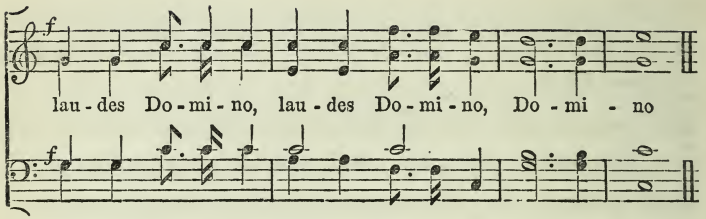
The boar's head is said to be bedecked with bays and rosemary, as in Southey's "Joan of Arc"—

> "When the boar's head,
> Crowned with gay garlands and with rosemary,
> Smoked on the Christmas board."

The peculiar import of the Bay requires no explanation. It has from immemorial usage been dedicated to adorn the temples of the living conqueror, and in the instance of the boar's head is simply transferred to the dead trophy. Parts of the boar's head—such as the tusks—were, we believe, also anciently gilded. The practice of decking the boar's head with rosemary seems to be very ancient. Decker, in his *Annus Mirabilis*

("Wonderful Year"), 1603, states that persons apprehensive of catching the plague went up and down with rue and wormwood stuffed into their nostrils, looking like so many boars' heads stuck with branches of rosemary, to be served for brawn at Christmas. Rosemary denoted properly rejoicing, and in old plays is constantly mentioned as having been in use at marriages. The old country squire, too, is presented to us stirring his cool tankard with a sprig of rosemary. There is a jocular saying in some parts of the country that "where the rosemary bush flourishes in the garden, the grey mare is the better horse." Pretty Ophelia says, "There's rosemary—that's for remembrance. Pray you, love, remember." She expected that Hamlet would wed her. Juliet's garrulous nurse, moreover, asks, "Doth not Romeo and rosemary both begin with a letter?" in allusion to marriage. From the verses of Herrick, it appears that rosemary at weddings was sometimes gilt. Not so at funerals, where it continued in use down to the reign of William III.—servants presenting sprigs to be carried in the hands of the company, and thrown after the body into the grave.

THE BOAR'S HEAD.—CAPUT APRI DEFERO.


Solo. Lively.
The boar's head in hand bear I, Be - deck'd with
bays and rose - ma - ry: And I pray you, my mas - ters, be
right mer - ry. Quot es - tis in con - vi - vi - o.
Chorus.
Ca - put a - pri de - fe - ro, Red - dens lau - des Do - mi - no.
Ca - put a - pri de - fe - ro, Red - dens lau - des Do - mi - no,

"THE BOAR IS DEAD."

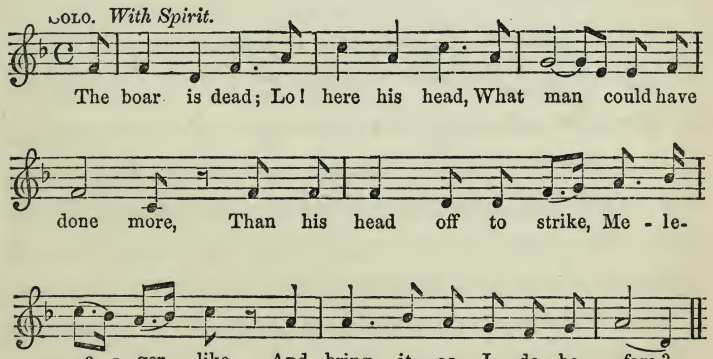
The carol of "The Boar is Dead, lo! here his head," is the Christmas grace that was sung before Prince Henry at St. John's College, Oxford, in 1607. The second stanza—

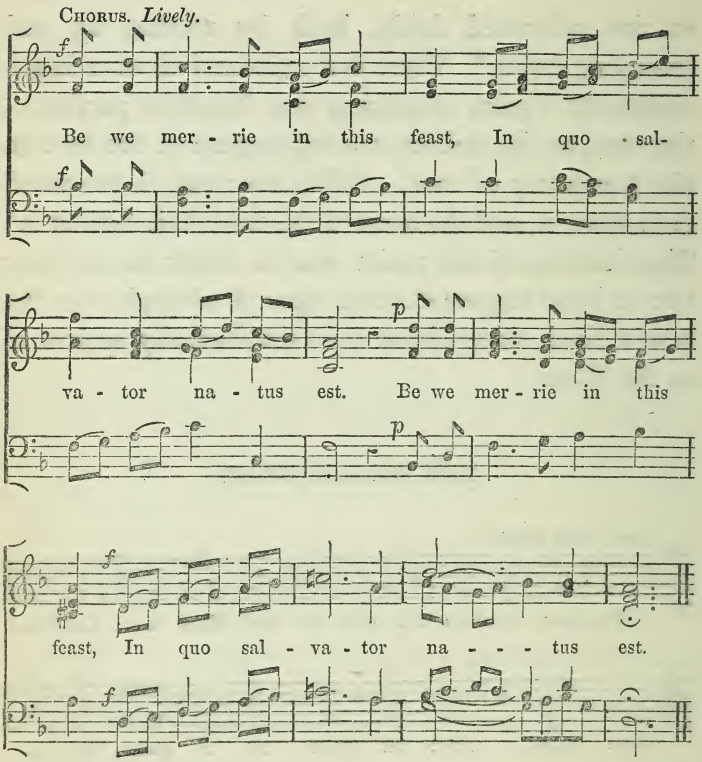
> "He living spoiled where good men toiled,
> Which made kind Ceres sorry"—

is an evident allusion to the classic story of the boar that laid waste King Æneas' fields by direction of the Godess Diana, as already noticed. The boar must at one time have been the common foe of agricultural industry, for naturalists assure us that at certain seasons "after they have assembled in herds, they are apt to sally forth from the forests, and do no small damage

to the cultivated fields, both by rooting up and trampling down." There is a scriptural allusion in the eighteenth Psalm, containing that beautiful parable of the vine, to the well-known antagonism of the boar to the prosperity of man. "The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the beast of the field doth devour it." The chanting of this psalm was as likely as anything else to have suggested these signs of triumph over the boar's head, since Christ is so emphatically spoken of as the Vine.

THE BOAR IS DEAD.


SOLO. With Spirit.
The boar is dead; Lo! here his head, What man could have
done more, Than his head off to strike, Me - le-
a - ger like, And bring it, as I do, be - fore?


Chorus. *Lively.*
Be we mer - rie in this feast, In quo - sal-
va - tor na - tus est. Be we mer - rie in this
feast, In quo sal - va - tor na - - - tus est.

IV.—CURRENT CAROLS.

We shall most conveniently wind up the present little Christmas work (which, if spared in health and strength, we intend to continue and extend next season) by some reference to the Carols mostly sung about the country at the present day.

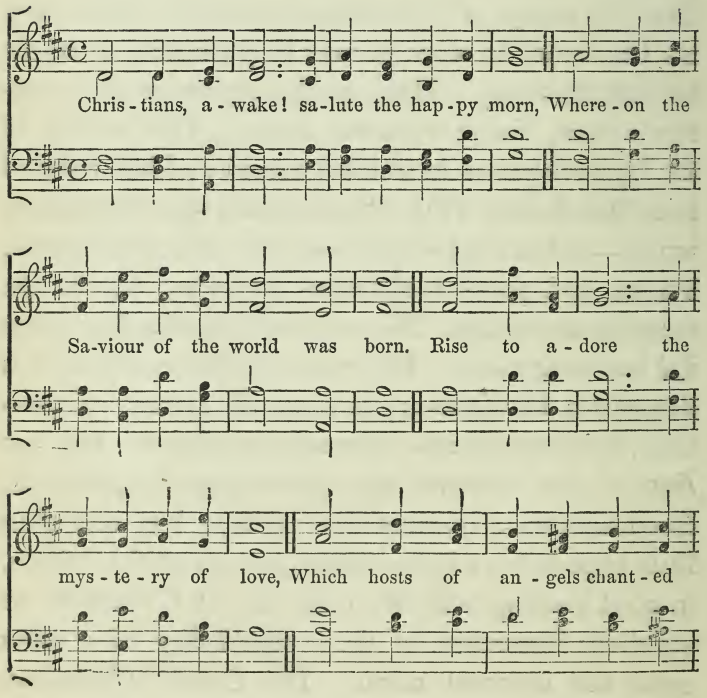
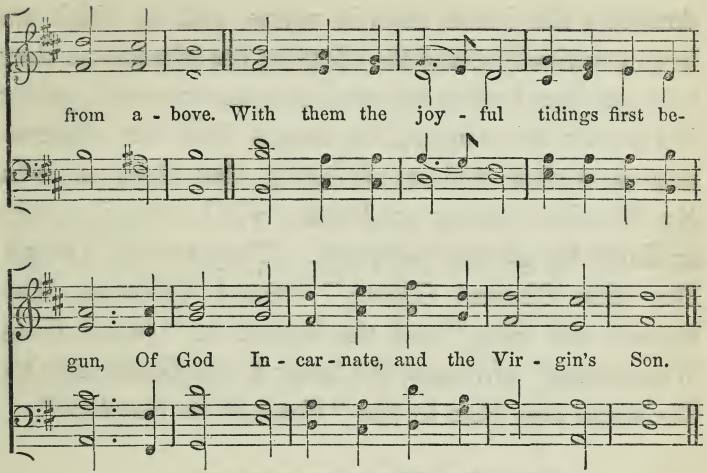
"CHRISTIANS! AWAKE!"

No Carol we possess is perhaps so much in vogue in the midland districts of the country as that commencing "Christians, awake." Yet it is not to be met with in any of the ordinary collections. For the last century and a half, however, (for it is no older) it has scarcely known a rival amongst the midland counties' choirs and those of their Yorkshire border. It is therefore the delight of many a veteran Christmas guest in those hearty and homely districts of merry England to recal in these simple and earnest strains the unalloyed delight of the Christmas morns of his youth, when every house, perhaps, for miles around, was serenaded, or rather, saluted with "Christians, awake"—in some respects, it

would seem, unseasonably; for it is but few Christmases since a fine old man (now, alas! no more) was recounting to us with animation how the "Christians" so unceremoniously awakened by double-bass violins as well as double-bass voices (the latter frequently several octaves below a bull) repaid this piece of attention by occasionally discharging a salute rather more unpleasant at the serenaders. Whilst fairly puzzled in tracing "Christians, awake" to its origin, and still more unsuccessful in disintering a Carol of "The Shepherds," formerly in vogue at Sutton Bonnington, Leicestershire, a person possessed of a copy of the Author's published poems came to the rescue, with the original Carol, words and music. The production proved to emanate from the brain of a genius whom we are happy to see that some attempt has since been made in the way of republication to rescue from the oblivion to which fate had all but consigned him, notwithstanding the renown of more than one of his productions. He is not only the author of this very popular Christmas Carol, but of the far more facetious, yet possibly superior piece of school verse familiarly known as the story of "The Three Black Crows." He also narrowly escaped being

the wearer of a very great poetic name,—it was only by the mistake of a letter that his name was not Byron. John Byrom, for that was the name, a graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge, and inventor of what he termed "The Universal English Short-Hand," was, then, the author of "Christians, awake!" How long his Carol took to work its way to popularity, it might be difficult to say. Half or three-quarters of a century's fame, living witnesses attest. That section of Dr. Byrom's poems in which it occupies a place is dated from Manchester, 1751. Byrom was a very voluminous writer—rather long winded as a poet. His paraphrases, hymns, and poetic meditations for every day in the calendar are endless. No wonder, then, that Christmas did not escape him. His most notable peculiarity is a disposition for discussing in verse all manner of questions, however intricate, learned, or critical. But the *forte* of this "ancient sage philosopher," is, after all, facetiousness—a circumstance perhaps less rare than little expected in a hymn-writer, but one which affords, in good keeping with the festivities of Christmas, an excellent illustration of the compatibility of a sober mind and innocent mirth. The Carol "Christians,

awake" will be found to breathe the very spirit of quiet joy over the natal morn of our Saviour:—

"CHRISTIANS, AWAKE!"

Chris - tians, a - wake! sa-lute the hap - py morn, Where - on the
Sa-viour of the world was born. Rise to a - dore the
mys - te - ry of love, Which hosts of an - gels chant - ed

Then to the watchful shepherds it was told,
Who heard the Angelic Herald's voice, "Behold!
"I bring good tidings of a Saviour's birth
To you and all the nations upon earth,
This day hath God fulfilled his promised word;
This day is born a Saviour, Christ the Lord!"

Of course it must be fully understood that the music as well as the words of this Carol are Dr. Byrom's. There are even more of the words, if we rightly remember; but certainly, for practical purposes, the above are of sufficient length, and they are the best.

Amongst the Carols most in vogue, and of which we have practically tested the effect by the admiration they have produced when executed in connexion with public lectures on this subject, we cannot draw our observations to a close without observing that three more in Mr. Novello's shilling publication will be found readily available for general adoption. They are the "Royal Day that Chasest Gloom," "Good Christian Men Rejoice and Sing," and the legend of "Good King Wenceslaus," although the latter is applicable less to Christmas Day than to the "Feast of St. Stephen."

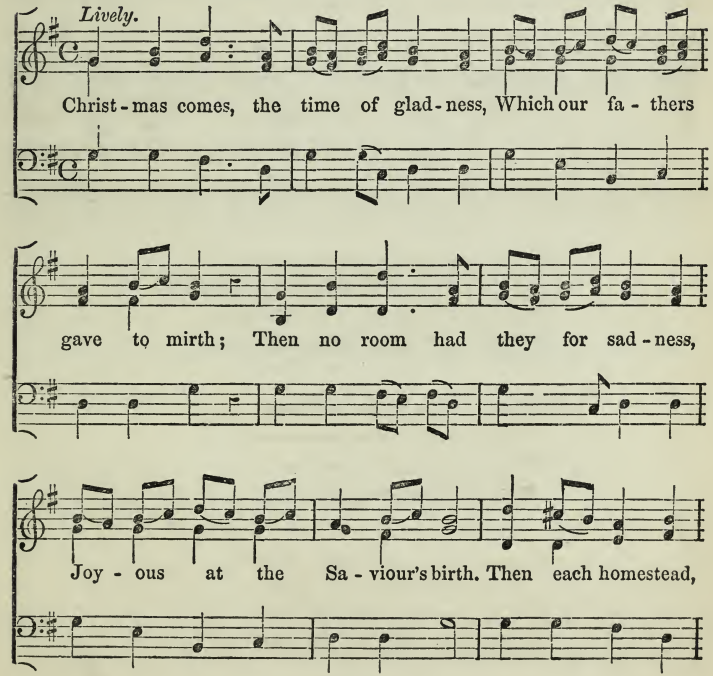
"Good King Wenceslaus looked out,
On the Feast of Stephen;
When the snow lay round about,
Pure, and crisp, and even.

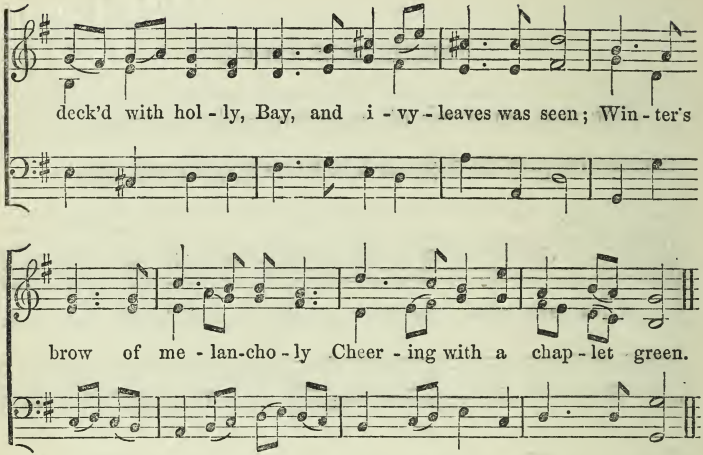
"Brightly shone the moon that night,
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight,
Gath'ring winter fuel.

"Hither, page, and stand by me,
If thou knows't it, telling
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling." &c.

"CHRISTMAS COMES."

This is a carol which may be said to occupy a large sphere of popularity, and is in very general use.


Lively.
Christ-mas comes, the time of glad-ness, Which our fa-thers
gave to mirth; Then no room had they for sad-ness,
Joy-ous at the Sa-viour's birth. Then each homestead,



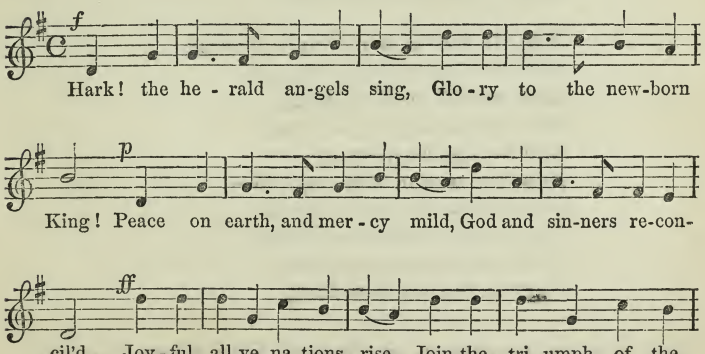
Then kind looks, with pleasure beaming,
Blazing hearth, and festive fare;
Hearts with social feeling teeming,
Welcome joy, and banish care.

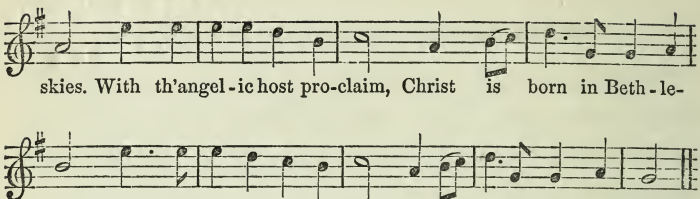
While, with early salutations,
Loud the parish bells were rung;
And in tones of gratulations,
Many a village Carol sung.

MENDELSSOHN'S HERALD ANGELS.

Of all the forms in which that glorious hymn, "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing," of the Evening Church Service for Christmas Day (but who ever sees evening service on that day!), has been given to the public, the adaptation of it to Mendelssohn's music will certainly be the best appreciated. We therefore present the compressed score of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, whose pure genius we are sure will be felt thrilling throughout the delicious melody he has created.

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING.


f
Hark! the he - rald an-gels sing, Glo - ry to the new-born
p
King! Peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin-ners re-con-
ff
cil'd. Joy-ful all ye na-tions rise, Join the tri-umph of the



Christ, by highest heaven ador'd,
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veil'd in flesh the Godhead he,
Hail th' incarnate Deity;
Pleas'd as man with men t' appear,
Jesus our Immanuel here.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of peace,
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Ris'n with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by—
Born that man no more may die—
Born to raise the sons of earth—
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

But that no condition or class of Christians may, so

far as we are concerned, be at a loss for their Christmas Carol, we shall add one yet more commonly sung, more universally known throughout the English Church than any other—viz., "The Angels Song at the Nativity of our Blessed Saviour,"—Luke, ii., 8-15—according to the ordinary paraphrase—

SONG OF THE ANGELS.

[To the same music as "The Virgin and Child," p. 148.]

While Shepherds watch their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around.
"Fear not," said he, (for mighty dread
Had seized their troubled mind),
Glad tidings of great joy I bring
To you and all mankind.

To you, in David's town, this day
Is born of David's line,
The Saviour, who is Christ the Lord,
And this shall be the sign:—
The heav'nly babe you there shall find
To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapt in swathing bands,
And in a manger laid."

Thus spake the seraph, and forthwith
Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, and thus
Addressed their joyful song:—
"All glory be to God on high,
And to the earth be peace,
Goodwill henceforth from Heav'n to men,
Begin, and never cease."

Our task is, for the present, ended. We have attempted to trace the Customs and the Carols of Christmas from first to last; and if we have omitted a few of the more familiar, in the anxiety to have the context before the holiday reader during the season of enjoyment, we can only say that we shall be happy to make amends at a future day.

THE END.

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